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Task Force on Labour Relations

Study No. 22

Times of Trouble: Labour Unrest and Industrial Conflict in Canada, 1900-66

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AND INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT IN CANADA, 1900-66**

BY

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSES, SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

The following lengthy study of the "History of Labour Unrest in Canada, 1900-66", was undertaken on behalf of the federal government's Task Force on Labour Relations, which is now sponsoring dozens of separate research projects, in response to what appeared to be a major "crisis" in labour relations in this country during 1965-66.

In view of this background and sponsorship, one feels compelled to answer the sort of question that is likely to be asked by the more pragmatically-minded taxpayer, namely: "What is the purpose, or to put it more crassly, the use of History, and all the lengthy, and at times tedious and costly, research that it entails?"

There is, of course, a certain enjoyment to be derived from the study of history, if it is properly written. There is the further justification that historical study and research can also play an important practical role in the policy-making sense. "We learn from experience", and "profit from past mistakes", according to well-known clichés. If we do not, we suffer accordingly. Or, as George Santayana observed: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." By studying the course of

events surrounding and generating particular phenomena identified as "problems", the various attempts to deal with them, and the ensuing results, we hope thereby to be able to recognize and avoid various errors that have been made in the past, and devise new and better measures for dealing with similar problems that may arise now or in the foreseeable future.

Measures appropriate for dealing with certain special problems of a previous era, of course, are often found inadequate in later years, for the general economic, social, political and technical environments in which they occurred have themselves undergone changes, which in turn change the nature of such problems when they recur in apparently similar forms. In this sense, history never exactly repeats itself, at least as regards establishing guidelines for present and future policy.

There is, perhaps, another justification of a more practical kind for the study of history, and that is, the better focus or more balanced sense of perspective that it can make available. One often feels overwhelmed by the pressure of present or recent events, and in the process may magnify current problems out of all proportion to their real importance. This in itself can lead to serious errors in policy. Particularly is this the case where a particular set of problems appears to be of such a magnitude as to constitute a "crisis". In such cases there may be much to be gained by studying similar crisis, with similar problems and similar manifestations, that have occurred in previous decades.

These generalizations would seem to have particular validity when applied to the history of labour unrest and industrial conflict in Canada over the past several decades. A rising tide of unrest and strikes during the 1960's, accompanied by numerous violent or illegal actions, reached a

peak during 1966, and left various types of maladjustments in their wake. These appeared to be of such a magnitude as to constitute a major "crisis" in industrial relations. They generated widespread speculation and alarm in various circles concerning the new and almost revolutionary changes that the country seemed to face, and led to the appointment of a special government body of inquiry to study the situation.

To a student of history, with the wisdom of hindsight, the strike wave of the mid-1960's should not, perhaps, have been too surprising, unless he were a confirmed optimist with a built-in belief in the inevitability of progress and perfectability in the conduct of human affairs. For, in terms of various criteria, the strike wave of 1965-66 was not a major crisis of entirely new magnitude. As the lengthy study that follows attempts to bring out, Canada had gone through several such industrial relations "crises" in previous decades, some of them more serious, relative to the size of population and the state of the national economy, than that of the mid-1960's. ✓

To those having a more optimistic view of life, of course, such observations provide no grounds for comfort. Canada had enjoyed an impressive rate of economic growth and a considerable rise in wages and living standards since World War II and earlier decades. Added to these were improved protective labour legislation, elimination of the more blatant types of exploitation, the formulation of more comprehensive social welfare and minimum income programs, and legislation that provided organized labour a higher and more secure degree of legal status and recognition. It was perhaps not unreasonable, therefore, to expect that the climate of labour-employer relations should have improved, and that industrial conflict of the magnitude of 1965-66 should have been a thing of the past. ✓

The answer of many historians, however, would be that history, while it does not exactly repeat itself, does seem to exhibit recurring cycles of similar behaviour-patterns, particularly in response to certain types of major structural changes, catastrophes, and maladjustments. Various groups of people tend to view their problems in traditional terms and to react in traditional ways under markedly different circumstances. It is perhaps unrealistic, then, to expect types of problems, or types of behaviour that are deemed to constitute problems, to be significantly reduced, much less eliminated, merely because people are economically better off and government policies more enlightened than before. For economic improvement and legislative reform, over fairly long periods at least, may often have the net effect of raising the aspirations of various groups even further above their prevailing conditions of life than before, and thus generate more, rather than less, frustration, unrest, protest and conflict. For this and other reasons, therefore, it may be no more realistic to assume that the problem, if such it is, of labour unrest and strikes should decline or disappear in modern urban industrial society, any more than we should expect other social problems to do so—such problems as ethnic or race conflict; juvenile delinquency and crime; divorce and desertion; alcoholism and drug addiction; and the like. The incidence of all of these in each case has tended to increase in fairly close tandem with economic growth and rising per capita incomes.

The present racial crisis in the United States is the most obvious case in point, and it has some very broad parallels in this country between French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians. Relative to their perhaps exaggerated expectations, many Negroes in the United States today probably feel more frustrated and exploited than their counterparts or ancestors in

previous decades, despite substantial gains in recent years, particularly as regards new legislation designed to improve their economic, political and social status. They tend to react accordingly, en masse. The persistence of old anachronisms, inconsistencies, hypocrisies and injustices, in the face of new and improved legislation on their behalf, enacted in the name of high-sounding principles, merely makes the situation that much more unbearable for many and generates massive and violent protest.

Most union members, of course, in Canada as well as the United States, generally constitute a much more privileged group than the ghetto Negroes in the United States today. But, on a much smaller and less violent and dangerous scale, large minorities within the ranks of organized labour may be feeling and reacting in a broadly similar way to a broadly similar situation. The legal and social status of unions in the 1930's, however, probably provides a closer parallel to that of ghetto Negroes in the United States in the 1960's.

Perhaps all this provides a more specific justification for what might appear to be an excessively lengthy and detailed history of labour unrest and conflict in Canada. One crux of the problem is the apparent sluggishness and resistance to change exhibited by various institutions, attitudes, laws, practices and procedures that constitute our industrial relations "system" in responding and adapting to changes in the industrial environment.

Many of the attitudes, traditions, policies and organizational structures of unions in Canada were formulated in the early stages of their development, particularly in the era preceding and immediately following World War I, and again during the severe depression of the 1930's.

Many employer attitudes and policies likewise constitute a traditional stance that developed in attempting to resist the challenges that a new and burgeoning, and often times violent, labour movement presented to long-established management authority, prerogatives and status.

Much the same can be said of government legislation and disputes settlement policies, and the precedents on the basis of which courts today attempt to enforce compliance with the law. The basic principles underlying these matters, as H.D. Woods and others have pointed out, appear to have been largely formulated, often on an ad hoc basis, in response to crises in earlier decades, in a period when labour relations were in a comparatively raw and brutal stage of evolution.

One final, and more specific, justification for undertaking a lengthy and detailed history of labour unrest in Canada, as manifested in strikes and other forms of overt conflict, is, to put it simply, that it has not been done before. As noted below, in discussing sources that were drawn upon in writing this study, there is a remarkable paucity of literature on the subject of industrial unrest and conflict in Canada. This is particularly the case in scholarly, academic and literary circles.

Over the past century or more, innumerable books, articles and special reports have contributed to a comprehensive and widely recognized body of knowledge about the struggles, frequently violent and bloody, between organized labour and employers in the United States. Novels and short stories, movies, spectacular photographs and newsreels, folk songs and songs of protest, have further contributed to a well-established folklore and mythology about organized labour and capital in the United States, complete with a long list of villains, heroes and martyrs.

In Canada, by contrast, no overall history of labour unrest and conflict has been written to date. And there have been very few thoroughgoing historical or analytical studies, at least in academic or historical circles, of individual strikes or other forms of overt conflict on the labour or industrial scene.

This fact perhaps tells us something significant about Canadian history generally, at least as Canadian historians have portrayed it, and thus something about the Canadian "national character", however that may be defined. One is almost led to suspect that there has been a sort of "conspiracy of silence" about the whole subject of labour unrest and industrial conflict, particularly of the more violent kind, in this country. Perhaps it would be more realistic to say that Canadian historians and other social scientists have had a mistaken or misguided image of Canadians as a people, and have consciously or unconsciously contributed to perpetuating that misleading image.

This may have arisen from a felt need for a special "Canadian identity" separate and distinct from that of the United States. As one aspect of this identity, many people are prone to view Canada, and to project the image to others, as being a country of relatively moderate, peaceful, stable and law-abiding people with a strong penchant for compromise. These virtues are pictured as being sharply in contrast to the prevalence of crime and illegality, disorder and violence, use of armed forces and suppression of civil liberties that we identify with the United States. These supposed Canadian virtues we attribute partly to the greater carry-over of British institutions and traditions to this country, and partly to the flexibility and compromise that were necessary to achieve a mode

of coexistence between an English-speaking and predominantly Protestant majority and a large French-speaking Catholic minority.

Canadian historians, as suggested above, have contributed strongly to this overall image. Canadian history up to 1867 portrays a relatively violent and disorderly society in which overt conflict was frequent among many groups: between whites and Indians, French and English, Canadians and Americans, rival fur trading interests, rebels supporting Mackenzie and Papineau vs. the Tory Establishment, and so on. Canadian history since 1867 by contrast, as far as the domestic scene is concerned at least, seems largely constitutional, political and economic in emphasis. It presents a picture of rapid but orderly progress towards developing a mature, advanced economy, and of adroit deals and compromises to wield together a decentralized, but unified, political unit. Outside of Canada's involvement in two world wars plus a few minor rebellions of Indians and Metis, overt conflict is pictured as being confined largely to a few of the more controversial and spectacular election campaigns, such as that of 1911 over the issue of Reciprocity with the United States.

The absence of any comprehensive and well-documented written history of labour unrest and industrial conflict in Canada, as noted, tends to exaggerate the traditional picture of Canadians as a moderate, stable and law-abiding people with a genius for compromise. This, to repeat, helps perpetuate a misleading image. For, as the history that follows would seem to portray, and as our earlier history would suggest, there is also a strong element of uncompromising rigidity and violence in the Canadian national character. It tends to be expressed in dramatic fashion in situations of crisis and conflict between important interest groups. True enough, on the

industrial scene strikes and lockouts in most years have been relatively less frequent, smaller, and less prolonged than in the United States, and they have been accompanied on the whole by less violence, illegality and forceful suppression of civil liberties. On the other hand, in view of the much larger size of populations and of union membership in the United States, as well as the greater frequency of strikes in that country, any comparison of the two would involve multiplying every incident of mass demonstrations and mob action, violence, property damage, armed suppression by police or military forces, injury and death, etc., in Canada, fifteen or twenty times over.

Viewed from this standpoint, then, Canada during this century has been a country having a record of labour unrest and industrial conflict, with illegal and violent overtones, second only to the United States, and far greater than that of most west European countries. From the perspective of history, therefore, various events and developments of 1965-66 should not be too surprising, and there is strong justification for studying past history to throw light on present problems in our industrial relations system.

THEORY OF CONFLICT

The above discussion suggests a further hypothesis, namely that there is a higher tolerance of conflict, and violence, in the United States and in Canada than in most countries. Indeed, to judge from the output of most communication media, particularly movies, television, comic strips, and various popular books and magazines, violent conflict tends to be glorified and glamourized on this continent. Canadians, in principle, according to our historians and others, are less tolerant of conflict, violent or

otherwise, than are Americans. And, as pointed out below, Canadian legislative policy in the labour relations field has been much more preoccupied with the prevention and settlement of industrial conflict than has been the case in the United States. However, various similarities and organizational and other ties between Canada and the United States have conduced to similar patterns of labour relations and industrial conflict in the two countries and perhaps to similar conflict patterns generally.

A tolerant view of conflict seems evident in the generally accepted principles expounded in the literature of Labor Economics and Industrial Relations in the United States. Scholars there have carried out by far the greatest amount of empirical research and theoretical analysis in this field.

The most widely accepted principles of labour relations in the United States, and in Canada, are basically similar to those first enunciated by the noted German sociologist, Georg Simmel, in his classical work entitled simply, Conflict 1/, and by his American disciple, Lewis Coser. 2/ The writings of many, if not most, labour economists in the United States apply these principles to the industrial scene, particularly in their interpretations of the role and functions of strikes and lockouts.

Simmel assumes, basically, that conflict is inherent in human beings and in all areas of human interaction or social relationships. It is an approach roughly analogous to that of Freud's concerning sex. Conflict is inseparable from co-operation in any relationship in which two or more distinct individuals or groups participate in joint ventures. It plays an essential functional role in keeping any society or group operating effectively, by serving to define the role of each participant and to maintain his, or its, motivation and interest.

Over-restriction or suppression of conflict of any one type, or in any one context, will, it is hypothesized, lead either to: 1) apathy and withdrawal of one, or some, or all of the participants, and a deterioration or end of the joint relationship or endeavour; or 2) sublimation and transference to other forms of expressions of conflict.

Focusing more specifically on the industrial scene, most of the writings that seek to explain the origins of trade unions and collective bargaining seem to follow a roughly similar line of analysis. They implicitly assume that modern industry, or the process of industrialization, necessarily generates conflict in one form or another for three main reasons, among others: 1) the "inherent" incompatibility of man and machine, the frustration and dissatisfaction of the variable human being having to adjust to the routine and monotonous task imposed by the machine process—these engender attitudes of hostility and willingness to engage in conflictful actions; 2) the rigid structuring of social relationships or class divisions, based on wide inequalities in wealth, income, power and authority—these are dictated by the financial and technological requirements of complex, large-scale operations characteristic of modern industry and business; and 3) the insecurity of individual workers in an environment of rapid technological and economic changes.

These combined effects of industrialization have motivated workers to organize into unions and engage in strikes, picketing, boycotting, and other forms of overt conflict, and employers to react accordingly.

Strikes are usually viewed as serving two constructive or "therapeutic" functions. First, "they clear the air", or enable workers to

"blow off steam" and thus release pent-up frustrations and antagonisms generated in the industrial scene. Secondly, they settle, by negotiation and agreement, underlying issues generating hostility and conflict between contending parties over the shares of money, status or power that the industrial system provides, and they define the respective roles that each party, labour, management, and government, are to play in the firm or industry.

Assuming, therefore, that the underlying industrial system necessarily generates conflict, one is led to conclude that if strikes and lockouts were sharply reduced or eliminated by legal restrictions, by the overwhelming power of management vis-à-vis workers, or by the restraints imposed by representative organizations of workers and employers through collective bargaining, then one or more of several results would ensue:

1. apathy and demoralization among one or both parties, with consequent loss of efficiency;
- or 2. growing dissatisfaction, tension, and hostility, with the likelihood of a major "blow-up" sooner or later;
- or 3. a higher incidence of covert, or hidden, as against overt industrial conflict, as alternative forms of expression. These are manifested by, for instance: widespread tension and unrest; high turnover, tardiness or absenteeism; carelessness and conscious or unconscious sabotage; thefts of company property; and the like;
- or 4. increased participation in alternative expressions of overt conflict, mainly outside the specific industrial context, as in aggressive or radical political action, riots and demonstrations, inter-personal and inter-group conflict, crime, violence, suicide, and the like.

PROBLEMS OF DEFINITION AND MEASUREMENT

Simmel's analysis, and the assumptions underlying most labour economists' views of industrial conflict, as outlined above, are open to criticism

on several grounds. 3/ It does, nonetheless, provide one potentially useful frame of analysis for empirical research in the study of industrial conflict. There are formidable problems of measurement, however.

Labour unrest, to begin with, may be defined as a state of potential conflict, a situation in which dissatisfaction, tension and hostility of a group, or groups, of workers towards employers, government, or other groups, including other workers, tend to generate conflict behaviour of one kind or another. As a subjective state of mind, however, it cannot be identified and measured at all accurately except by an excessively costly and time-consuming process of psycho-social analysis. This, of course, would be impossible to do historically, to cover the past six decades or more. Presumably, then, labour unrest can be identified and gauged only to the extent that it has been expressed in observable patterns of behaviour that can be identified as being in the category of conflict.

These, however, present further difficulties. The various types of covert conflict, as defined above, are virtually impossible to identify and measure with any degree of accuracy: to take, for example, two behaviour patterns that are often identified as indicative of labour unrest and conflict, namely, high rates of labour "turnover", and of "absenteeism".

Statistics on labour turnover at the present time are generally primitive and fragmentary, at best, and for previous decades they are almost entirely lacking. Even where they are available they tell us little or nothing about causes. High voluntary "quit rates" in a firm or industry in a particular period may be indicative of widespread and intense labour unrest and job dissatisfaction. But, they also may be the result of rapid

economic expansion generally, in a context in which increasing numbers of workers can enjoy a wider choice of higher-paying or more satisfying jobs, or simply pursue a wider search for new experience.

"Absenteeism" presents similar problems. Comprehensive statistics over the nation as a whole are impossible to obtain, now or in previous decades. In any case, direct causal connections between absenteeism and labour unrest or dissatisfaction are difficult to establish. An intensive study of one manufacturing plant, for instance, found that rates for absenteeism were higher among the skilled maintenance workers, whose jobs were individualized and relatively highly paid, and whose levels of job satisfaction would therefore presumably be higher, than among the semi-skilled workers doing routine mechanized jobs on assembly lines. The reason for this, it was found, was that, among the semi-skilled workers on assembly-line work, group pressure was exerted upon individuals to cut down on absenteeism because of disruption of operations in a highly co-ordinated production process. For absenteeism imposed irritations, inconveniences and strains upon other workers, and imposed losses or reductions in group bonuses in pay where disruptions caused declines in output. 4/

Any attempt to portray a history of labour unrest in Canada over a period of several decades, therefore, has to focus on overt conflict, manifested primarily in the form of strikes and lockouts and accompanying tactics such as picketing and boycotting. It would also involve an analysis of other forms of overt conflict arising out of, and interacting with or contributing to, labour-employer conflict in the industrial context, as well as strikes and protest demonstrations aimed directly against governments at different levels. These would include such phenomena as anti-Oriental riots and

discriminatory practices in British Columbia in previous decades; conflict between French-speaking and English-speaking workers and employers in Quebec; inter-union conflict, jurisdictional disputes and strikes; strikes, demonstrations and riots by unemployed and dependents on relief (particularly where unions of unemployed as well as employed workers were organized or sponsored by the same sources); political agitation and the formation of radical political groups and parties; and various reactions to such developments by employers and their supporters, as well as by governments, which on numerous occasions have involved the use of police and armed forces.

It should be stressed, in this connection, that labour unrest and overt conflict should not be viewed as arising solely in the context of labour-management relations. Government at all levels has also entered into the picture as a distinct and separate entity. Its role and impact in the labour scene have varied widely since the turn of the century. Government industrial relations policy has not been simply that of a neutral umpire between two main conflicting interest groups, nor of a mere passive tool of the more powerful vested interests. The main preoccupation of government policy throughout this period was that of preventing or settling overt conflicts, and maintaining "law and order" in terms of the official interpretation prevailing at the time. In earlier decades, when the law stressed private property rights and unions were viewed as a threat to the established order, industrial relations policies of governments tended to favour employers at the expense of organized labour. In later decades, when unions had become firmly established on a large scale despite protracted and sometimes forceful and violent employer opposition, government policy changed emphasis to exert pressure on employers to recognize and

bargain with unions. On other occasions, again, governments at both federal and provincial levels imposed a considerable measure of compulsion upon organized labour and management alike, when this was deemed necessary to protect or further specific objectives that had a high priority in official policy.

Thus labour unrest, as manifested in various forms of overt conflict over a period of more than six decades, has to be viewed as operating in a complex and changing web of legislation and administrative rules and regulations governing such matters as: job rights and property rights; labour's rights to organize; union recognition and certification for bargaining; the conduct of strikes, lockouts, picketing and boycotting; conciliation and arbitration procedures; issuance of court injunctions in labour disputes; and the like.

The main indices of unrest and conflict are, to a considerable extent, amenable to statistical measurement and analysis. The federal Department of Labour, conveniently, since 1901 has been compiling statistical estimates of the number of strikes, of employers and workers involved, and of man-days of employment lost, by industry and by province, as well as for the nation as a whole. From these, in relation to total employment and union membership, may be derived such indices as "intensity of union organization", union membership and employee "involvement ratio", "employee-loss ratio", "membership-loss ratio", and "average duration" of strikes and lockouts. 5/

Broad statistical aggregates and indices of strikes do not in themselves, of course, provide a really adequate measure of labour unrest and industrial conflict. As A.M. Ross and P.T. Hartman point out, in their classic comparative survey of strike activity in 15 countries: 6/ "Thus

it is clear that the strike is not a homogeneous phenomenon, but has different meanings in different parts of the world". (And, these authors might have added, the same applies to different industries or trades, in different regions, and in different decades, in the same parts of the world.) Or again:

Really it is misleading to use the same word for such different phenomena. It stands to reason that a "strike" of eighty days and a "strike" of two days do not have the same causes, nor the same consequences, and cannot be explained by the same theory. To consider all strikes as homogeneous occurrences stands in the way of enlightenment. I/

One obvious difficulty arises in this connection, in attempting to use strikes and lockouts as the main index in portraying and measuring the history of industrial conflict in Canada. The legal status of strikes has changed over a period of several decades, and this in turn has changed the objective and character of strikes. Up until well on into World War II, as the following chapters recount, a high proportion of strikes was carried out in order to force employers to recognize and bargain with unions as well as to grant such concessions as wage increases, shorter hours, and settlement of various grievances of workers. Since then legislation has been passed requiring employers to recognize and bargain with properly representative unions. It has set up elaborate administrative machinery designed to facilitate reaching agreement between unions and employers, and prohibits strikes, lockouts and other supporting tactics while union-employer agreements are in force.

Strikes since World War II, therefore, unlike the situation in previous decades, can be fairly clearly classified into two main categories: 1) legal "interest" disputes, which are undertaken only after the legally

required procedures of bargaining, conciliation and voting have been gone through; and 2) illegal "protest" or "wildcat" strikes, as well as jurisdictional and organizational strikes, together with picketing, boycotting and other supplementary tactics that occur without going through the above-mentioned legally-required procedures.

A mere statistical tabulation and comparison of the frequency, size and duration of strikes, therefore, obviously do not in themselves provide any realistic measurement or comparison of labour unrest and labour management conflict over any extended period of time. "Interest" disputes today, carried out only after protracted bargaining negotiations and conciliation procedures have been gone through, may be presumed to involve a fairly rational assessment of potential gains and losses by both parties in striving for tangible goals and objectives. They are, therefore, not an adequate index, by themselves, of labour unrest and dissatisfaction in industry. The latter may, however, constitute the underlying pressure or motive force that causes such disputes to develop into strikes or lockouts despite the legal pressures for peaceful settlement.

"Wildcat" strikes and other illegal tactics, on the other hand, in most cases develop spontaneously and "on the spur of the moment" so to speak. They break out in protest against various conditions that generate dissatisfaction among workers to the explosive point, where it is expressed in an overt form of conflict. To this extent they may, then, be a fairly accurate index of labour unrest in an industry or trade. The extent to which this is the case, however, probably varies widely among different unions and occupational groups.

Comparisons are even more difficult as between different eras. A carefully planned strike today, carried out for clearly defined gains, and with full legal sanction, would not be an expression of labour unrest comparable to an equally large and prolonged strike of an earlier decade, in which a union was seeking recognition and other concessions from an employer who was intent on destroying the organization.

One obvious problem here is that mere numbers or sizes of aggregates alone are not adequate measures of labour unrest and the propensity to engage in overt conflict. There is a qualitative as well as a quantitative dimension to the issue. However, other indices, which may be taken as indicative of the intensity of conflict, are also amenable to description and to statistical measurement and analysis to some degree. These include such phenomena as public demonstrations and mob action, as measured by frequency and numbers participating; instances of violence, property damage, and other illegal actions; intervention of police or armed forces; arrests and convictions; personal injuries and deaths.

It should be observed, in this connection, that labour unrest and industrial conflict are not expressed solely by the actions of workers, organized or unorganized. Nor should the measures taken by employers and governments be viewed merely as reactions in response to actions by organized labour or other groups that are deemed to be threatening to the interests, security, status and authority of private employers or of governments. Some of the most bitter and protracted strikes in Canadian history were provoked by wage cuts or by technological or other changes imposed unilaterally by employers without prior notification to their workers. Or again on numerous occasions in Canadian history the enactment of specially punitive legislation, or the use of police or military forces in anticipation

of threatening actions by organized labour groups, have been the cause of, or at least the occasions for, overt conflict. That is to say, aggressive or violent action by various labour groups has often been provoked by resentment against the use of armed forces, or the discriminatory and one-sided support provided by governments to employers. In brief, any adequate history of labour unrest and conflict in Canada over the past six decades or more has to take account of the attitudes, policies and actions of employers and governments or their representatives, as well as of organized or unorganized labour.

There is, perhaps, a further objection to using strikes and supplementary tactics as the main index of labour unrest. The enactment of labour disputes legislation during and since World War II has been designed primarily to channel overt conflict away from expressions of "direct" action, involving the use of force, and into "indirect" or "diplomatic" channels, such as mediation or conciliation, grievance procedure and arbitration, up to and including submission to courts of law for final decisions. In attempting to measure the extent and intensity of labour unrest, therefore, should one not undertake a thorough statistical and analytical study of the number and proportion of labour-employer negotiations, in each industry and province, that are "processed" by conciliation officers and boards, as well as through grievance procedures and arbitrations?

Aside from the inordinate amount of time, effort, personnel and expense that would be involved in such a study, there are several limitations in using such data as indices of labour unrest and conflict. In the first place, due to changes in legislation, the widespread use of such procedures is largely confined to the postwar II era, so would make comparisons

with earlier decades difficult or impossible. Secondly, the very availability of such machinery may tend to exaggerate the degree or intensity of labour unrest in some respects. That is to say, it may increase the number and scope of labour "disputes" by encouraging unions and/or employers to use the procedures available in attempting to win concessions which they would otherwise not attempt to achieve. Many a union, for instance, has submitted demands to a conciliation board which it would never think of going out on strike for, if such boards were not readily available under government auspices. And finally, strikes and lockouts would still seem to be a valid measure of labour unrest and industrial conflict, in so far as one may presume that those disputes that do result in strikes or lockouts after conciliation or arbitration procedures have been completed, or which occur illegally in violation of required procedures, are indicative of greater unrest and conflict than those which are settled by such procedures.

That is not always the case, of course. Some industries, by the very nature of their importance to the general public, generate special pressures on the parties to a dispute to reach agreement through conciliation or arbitration proceedings. In other industries such pressures are lacking. Thus, the fact that there is a far lower incidence of strikes in railways or in the civil service than in the construction or automobile manufacturing industries does not necessarily indicate that there is less labour unrest in the former than in the latter.

This problem, however, would seem possible to overcome in an historical study extending over a period of several decades. For one important measure of the degree of labour unrest existing in industries or regions,

or over the nation as a whole, is the degree to which workers in vital industries who are subject to such special pressures or inhibitions against engaging in direct action do nonetheless carry out strikes and supplementary tactics of industrial warfare.

There is one final objection, perhaps, to focusing on strikes, lock-outs and supplementary tactics including, particularly, the violence and illegality that have sometimes accompanied them, as a measure of industrial unrest. The picture presented may tend to exaggerate the degree of turbulence in Canadian labour relations generally. As college textbooks on Labour Economics and Industrial Relations keep reminding us, of the thousands of collective bargaining negotiations that are carried on each year, the vast majority—90% or more—reach agreements peacefully. Only a minority of 10% or less, on the average, develop into disputes or deadlocks that have to go through legally required conciliation or arbitration procedures. Most of these, in turn, are settled without resulting in open breaks. All told, therefore, strikes and lockouts result from only a small fraction, generally less than 5%, of collective bargaining negotiations and involve a correspondingly small percentage of workers bound by union agreements. Only rarely do strikes account for as much as one-half of 1% of total man-days of employment over the nation as a whole during any given year.

There are several answers one could offer by way of justification to counter this objection. First, this study is intended to be a history of labour unrest as such, so necessarily must focus on the areas of our industrial relations system in which overt conflict has occurred. Secondly, as noted above, other indices of labour unrest and conflict, in the covert category, have been found impossible to measure, so that focusing on strikes

and supplementary tactics alone would tend to under-estimate the extent of labour unrest in any given period. Or, to use the well-worn analogy, strikes, etc., are merely the "exposed tip of the iceberg" indicating a much larger but unknown magnitude of unrest that is hidden from view. And finally, a detailed account of labour unrest and conflict in Canada since the turn of the century, with all the violence, illegality and forceful suppression that have frequently accompanied these may help correct the misleading picture of an unrealistically orderly and rational Canadian society that our historians seem to have presented to date.

ORGANIZATION AND PRESENTATION OF DATA

Needless to say, it has been extremely difficult to present an orderly historical account and analysis of labour unrest and industrial conflict in Canada since the turn of the century. Strikes and other overt manifestations of labour unrest have numbered in the tens of thousands over the past 67 years. They have occurred in hundreds of different industries, and in thousands of different localities, in every major region of the country. To handle the subject in an at all manageable and coherent fashion has required arranging and analyzing the data in three related aspects or "areas", as follows.

Chronological

Labour unrest in Canada, as the account in the following pages will bring out, has developed in pronounced "waves" or "cycles" of varying duration. Periods of mounting unrest and conflict have reached peak periods of intensity, followed by periods of relative quiescence. The beginnings and ends of such periods have been marked by major developments of

one kind or another, such as unusually rapid economic growth, basic structural or technological changes, major political upsets, wars, booms and depressions. In terms of such broad forces it has been found most convenient, for purposes of analysis and historical portrayal, to present the subject in seven somewhat arbitrarily chosen periods, as follows:

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 1. Pre-War I: | 1900-13 |
| 2. World War I and Immediate Postwar: | 1914-20 |
| 3. The Twenties: | 1921-29 |
| 4. The Thirties: | 1930-39 |
| 5. World War II and Postwar Inflation: | 1940-50 |
| 6. The Fifties: | 1951-59 |
| 7. The Sixties: | 1960-67 |

Regional

Most industrial unrest and conflict in Canada, as emphasized in Chapter I, has been local or regional in scope and has differed widely in character and intensity from one region to another. Only on relatively rare occasions, and under special circumstances or crisis situations, do we find labour unrest expressed in similar behaviour patterns on a nationwide scale.

The cyclical pattern outlined above, therefore, has to be portrayed primarily in terms of the main regions or provinces in which unrest and conflict have been concentrated at various times.

Industrial

The above observations regarding different regional patterns of conflict likewise apply to different industries. The industries in which

unrest appears to have been most prevalent, and which have accounted for a disproportionate share of strikes and lockouts at various times, are largely peculiar to certain regions or provinces. Thus, for instance, coal mining has been confined mainly to Nova Scotia, British Columbia and southwestern Alberta; centres of unrest and conflict in the lumber and fishing industries largely to British Columbia; steel, nickel mining and smelting, and automobile manufacturing, largely to Ontario; and textiles and shoe manufacturing largely to Quebec. To a great extent, therefore, any study of industrial unrest in particular regions, and in particular periods, has to focus on particular industries, though unrest and conflict generated in one or two major industries have often spread to others within a region.

Notable exceptions to this generalization are such industries as construction, railroads, public service and others that are common to all regions in the country. Even in these cases, however, conflict has tended to be mainly regional in context, and derived originally from other industries. To repeat, only on rare occasions has a similar pattern of unrest occurred in particular industries on a nation-wide scale.

A statistical analysis of industrial unrest in the above three "areas" or contexts, as measured by the incidence of strikes, has been undertaken elsewhere. 8/ The chapters that follow present merely the historical, or chronological, sequence of industrial unrest, by industries or by regions as well as over the nation as a whole. An attempt is made to weigh the relative importance of various events, and to relate them by industry and region to the general economic, political and social environments in which they occurred. In this connection, Chapter II, dealing with events in the pre-War I period from 1901-13 inclusive, is considerably longer and more

discursive than are succeeding chapters. It seemed appropriate to present the story in this way because a fairly lengthy analysis of certain basic national, regional and industrial factors or forces that helped shape and condition the character of labour unionism, unrest and conflict in the earlier period continued to exert a strong and pervasive influence in later decades.

There have been formidable difficulties in sampling, and in balance of presentation, in attempting to analyze industrial unrest and conflict in Canada since the turn of the century. Most of the thousands of strikes that have occurred in each period outlined above can be grouped in statistical aggregates to illustrate prevailing trends or cycles in major regions and industries. A rudimentary picture is presented for most of the larger strikes in each region and each period. A few conflicts of major importance have been singled out in each period as meriting description and analysis at some length. Their relative importance has been measured, perhaps somewhat arbitrarily and intuitively, in terms not only of their size or duration, intensity or violence. More important have been their overall effects in terms of their impact upon labour, employer and public attitudes and policies, as well as upon the status and growth of the trade union movement.

SOURCES

One essential limitation in undertaking to compile a history of labour unrest and conflict in Canada since the turn of the century, as noted earlier, has been the relative paucity of literature on the subject in this country. This is particularly marked on the part of scholarly or academic personnel. As one indication: a few years ago the Industrial Relations Centre of Queen's University published a highly useful bibliography of M.A.

and Ph.D. theses, as well as books and articles in scholarly and other journals, and reports of official agencies, on subjects falling within the general purview of industrial relations. Hundreds of titles are listed in this bibliography under various headings, comprising books, theses and articles dealing with such subjects as labour disputes legislation and policy, principles and procedures of conciliation and arbitration, and the like. On the other hand, there are only a few dozen studies of actual industrial disputes, or of the subject of labour unrest and conflict generally. One is led to wonder, therefore, how Canadian scholars and labour relations experts have been able to write so much about, advise, and formulate policy for dealing with industrial conflict in this country, when the subject itself has been so little known or studied in scholarly or scientific circles!

There is, of course, a vast volume of written data in the primary category to draw upon to fill out these gaps in our historical knowledge about the subject of industrial conflict in Canada. The main source for the account that follows is the Labour Gazette, published regularly by the federal Department of Labour since it was first established in 1901. It furnishes the only at all reliable set of statistical estimates as to the frequency, size, duration and location of strikes in Canada, by industry and by province. The earlier editions of this official journal, roughly up to the 1950's, also provide a wealth of descriptive and historical material regarding various developments and events surrounding major conflicts.

Another important source has been numerous special reports by Royal Commissions, at both the federal and provincial level, investigating labour disputes, and labour-employer relations generally, in particular industries

and provinces. A high proportion of these is concerned with coal mining because of the unusual prevalence of conflict in that industry. The reports, however, have varied widely in insight, impartiality and knowledge.

Another important source of primary data, of course, could have been the innumerable reports by federal and provincial conciliators and arbitrators, both individuals and boards, dealing with the thousands of disputes that have had to be "processed" in recent decades. Because of the inordinate cost in time, effort, personnel and money that a thorough examination of such data would have involved, however, as well as other limitations mentioned earlier, this source has been drawn upon to only a limited extent.

So likewise with local newspaper reports covering strikes and other manifestations of labour unrest and conflict. They have been drawn upon to a considerable extent to describe particular disputes of special interest or importance, while recognizing that such sources were not always adequate or impartial by any means. 9/ In the nature of the case, however, limitations in time, personnel and resources ruled out any sort of thorough survey of this source.

There are a few scholarly, and other, books and articles dealing with unions and industrial conflict in certain industries and regions, or with certain labour disputes. These have been drawn upon extensively in this study. H.A. Logan's Trade Unions in Canada 10/, of course, has been an indispensable reference throughout. Some useful leads were also provided in a much more biased and inadequate history of Canadian unionism by Charles Lipton, entitled The Trade Union Movement of Canada, 1827-1959. 11/ In coal mining there is Eugene Forsey's Economic and Social Aspects of the Nova Scotia Coal Industry 12/ and, more general in its coverage of this industry,

an excellent thesis by Emil Bjarnason entitled "Collective Bargaining in the Coal Mining Industry of Canada, 1825-1938." 13/ The most detailed and comprehensive history of unionism and industrial conflict in a particular province is Paul Phillips', No Power Greater -- a Century of Labour in B.C. 14/

A few labour disputes have been studied intensively by certain scholars, and others. Outstanding among these are: D.C. Masters, The Winnipeg General Strike 15/ ; a chapter dealing with the same strike in Kenneth McNaught's A Prophet in Politics 16/ ; and the volume of essays edited by Pierre-E. Trudeau dealing with the asbestos workers' strike in Quebec in 1949, entitled La Grève de l'amiante. 17/ There is a graphic account of the "on-to-Ottawa Trek" and the Regina riot of 1935 in a chapter in H.W. Gray's The Winter Years. 18/ A much more detailed but highly partisan and biased account of this latter event is contained in R. Liversedge, Recollections of the On-to-Ottawa Trek, 1935. 19/ Labour troubles in East Coast and Great Lakes shipping are dealt with in an equally partisan account, from an opposing political viewpoint, in Pat Sullivan's Red Sails in the Great Lakes. 20/ For this subject a much more reliable and comprehensive source, of course, is the Report of the Royal Commission chaired by Mr. Justice Norris, the so-called "Norris Report". 21/

A few university theses have also been based on intensive studies of certain labour disputes. Notable among these that were available to this author are H.K. Ralston, "The 1900 Strike of Fraser River Sockeye Salmon Fishermen" 22/, Allen D. Orr, "The Western Federation of Miners and the Royal Commission on Industrial Disputes in 1903" 23/, Anthony D. Scott, "The Province Strike and Its Background" 24/, and Gilles Groulx, "Le Syndicalisme dans l'industrie textile du Québec". 25/

Other shorter accounts of various labour disputes are contained in numerous journal articles and reports that are referred to in the chapters that follow.

Finally, there have been several research works and unpublished reports by various people engaged in the Task Force on Labour Relations project which were available to the author at the time of writing. Particularly helpful in this regard have been: 1) a study of violence in labour disputes in Canada over the period 1957-67 inclusive, carried out under the direction of Francoise Côté 26/, and 2) a complex statistical analysis of strikes in Canada since 1900 that was undertaken by John Vanderkamp. 27/

Because of the fragmentary and uneven quality of the sources outlined above, the portrayal of labour unrest and industrial conflict in Canada in the following chapters is not as well balanced as would be desired. Some incidents have been treated perhaps in greater detail than their relative importance would merit, simply because the sources were unusually full. Other important developments had to be treated much too briefly because adequate information was lacking.

THE PROBLEM OF BIAS

In undertaking an historical analysis of labour unrest and conflict in Canada, it is difficult to avoid leaving oneself open to criticism on grounds of presenting a biased picture. Ideally historians and social scientists should achieve perfect objectivity and balanced presentation in portraying such phenomena as the clashing attitudes, tactics and policies of interest groups involved in conflict situations. In fact, this is rarely achieved. Social scientists, like other people, are products of particular

social environments and tend to identify with some groups more than others, because of particular family backgrounds, traditions, experiences, sympathies and interests. Thus a posture of complete neutrality and scientific objectivity can all too easily become, in effect, a covert defence of particular interests or of the status quo in general, past or present. Economists and historians seem to be particularly subject to criticism on this score. On the other hand, one can too easily accept the unavoidability of bias and the necessity for making value judgments, and use this as a justification for engaging in mere polemics for or against particular individuals, groups or policies. The proper line between these two stances is a difficult one to achieve and maintain.

In the course of pursuing this study the writer has been vulnerable to a pro-labour bias, for several reasons. In the first place, the subject itself necessarily involves focusing attention on labour as one major group in conflict situations and attempting to understand the attitudes, motivations, and actions of workers, union leaders and members in response to various employer and government policies, and to different social and economic environments generally. To properly understand persons or groups, perhaps one must feel as they do and identify with them, to some extent at least.

Again, an historical analysis in itself tends unavoidably to inculcate a similar bias. There is the cliché to the effect that history has to be, or should be, rewritten every generation. This would seem to be the case particularly in such subjects as labour unrest, industrial conflict, and labour relations generally. It is widely accepted as true today that employer and government policies in issues concerning union recognition

and collective bargaining have been considerably more enlightened and equitable since World War II than they were during the 1930's and earlier, and organized labour correspondingly has enjoyed greater security and status than before. Until well on into World War II employers in most cases had greater bargaining power than any unions that threatened them, and the forces of the law definitely favoured them. In both respects organized labour was usually the underdog. From this perspective, then, with the wisdom of hindsight, it is difficult, when portraying conflict situations in the earlier decades, to avoid being unduly critical of the former and sympathetic towards the latter, and to condone various actions of organized workers at that time which one would be inclined to condemn if carried out today.

An element of bias, where freely acknowledged and made clear at the outset, does not necessarily destroy the validity of a study as long as an honest attempt is made to provide satisfactory evidence to support the position one takes in passing judgment on an issue. To ignore, hide or distort factual evidence that might undermine that position, however, would be inexcusable.

Here again the problem of sources, and of time and resources, has made it difficult to provide a properly balanced presentation. In attempting a broad historical survey of literally hundreds of conflicts in Canada over a period of more than six decades it has been impossible to examine all the sources, verbal and written, that would have to be drawn upon to examine every case fully and in depth. The verbal and published material that has been available to the writer for this study, particularly for earlier decades, has tended in the aggregate to present a picture that elicits

more sympathy for labour than for employers or governments. Eye-witness accounts have generally been forthcoming more readily, and in larger numbers, from union sympathizers and direct participants in the conflicts described than from the employers involved. Again, the relative paucity of research studies of industrial conflict by social scientists and other scholars, as complained of earlier, has left the field to a large extent to writers who have had a special interest in, or emotional involvements with, the cause of organized labour. Even those sources that attempt a neutral and impartial analysis of conflict situations—such as government boards or commissions, and to a much lesser extent, newspapers—tend to present facts and figures that elicit more sympathy for the workers than for the employers or governments involved. Where armed force has been employed by the state in labour disputes, in the overwhelming majority of cases it has been directed against workers rather than employers. In the nature of the case it has been superior in effect. On numerous occasions in the past employers have utilized armed force as well, with the sanction of the state. Because of the numbers involved, and the instruments of force available to the contending parties in strikes or other conflict situations, personal injuries and deaths, as well as hardship and deprivation generally, have been far more prevalent among workers than among employers or government personnel. Even when presented as bare statistics, these tend to have a greater and more dramatic impact on the reader than those pertaining to property damage and other business losses, or to hardship and inconvenience to the public.

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CHAPTER I

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SETTING

The outstanding characteristic of industrial relations in Canada, and more specifically of strike activity, as Ross and Hartman point out 1/, is that it broadly resembles that of the United States in a generally similar and distinctly "North American pattern of industrial conflict". The main features of this "pattern", common to both countries, is and has been the unusually high "incidence" of strikes, due to their relatively high frequency, moderately large size, and unusually long duration as compared to most comparably industrialized countries in Europe and Asia. According to these authors:

The fact is that the text book or dictionary definition of the strike is fully applicable only in the United States and Canada. Only in these two countries—which really comprise a single system of industrial relations—is the strike still sufficiently frequent to constitute a significant method of determining conditions of employment, and at the same time sufficiently long to test the staying power of workers and employers. 2/

Not only is there this matter of the high incidence of strikes common to the two countries. As the voluminous literature on labour history in the United States has portrayed, and as this study attempts to bring out for Canada, there also appears to have been an unusually high incidence of force

and violence, defiance of the law, and legal suppression by police and military forces in industrial disputes on this continent. It is much more difficult to formulate measurable statistics about such phenomena, of course, as a basis for comparison between countries. Violence was much more common on the industrial scene during the first three decades of this century and its incidence appears to have declined considerably since World War II. The traditions, attitudes and behaviour-patterns engendered by events of the earlier decades, however, have carried over and influenced the industrial relations climate on this continent in recent years and created special problems of legislation and law enforcement.

The similarity of industrial relations systems in the two countries, to the point where they can be considered as one, according to Ross and Hartman, has arisen from a number of fairly obvious factors. The natural lines of transportation and communication in Canada run north and south rather than east and west, and most Canadians, particularly those in the largest and most important urban-industrial centres, live within 50 to 100 miles of the United States border. The majority of the population in both countries speaks much the same language and has many of the same economic, political, social and religious institutions, customs, attitudes and behaviour-patterns. The vast expansion and improvement of transportation and communication facilities in recent decades have greatly increased the impact of American-inspired fads and fashions, ideas, values and behaviour-patterns in Canada.

More important than all these, however, as regards the specific question of industrial relations, is the fact that Canadian unions and employers alike are to a large extent subsidiary bodies of their United

States counterparts. The vast majority of union members in Canada belongs to organizations that are branches of so-called "international" unions, the membership, headquarters and top leaders of which are predominantly American. Union organizational structures, governmental systems, ideologies and policies in Canada, therefore, tend to reflect those of United States parent bodies in their respective industry and trade jurisdictions.

United States ideologies, policies and personnel are likewise heavily represented to a growing degree on the employer side as the Canadian economy becomes increasingly Americanized. While no exact statistical estimate has been made on this question, it is safe to say that a large fraction, and probably a majority, of organized wage-earners in Canada is employed in the more than 4,000 enterprises that are branch plants or subsidiaries of United States corporations. More than one-half of the total investment in Canadian manufacturing, almost two-thirds in mining and smelting, and more than 90% in such fields as oil well drilling and refining, and automobile production, comes from United States capital. It represents some of the largest and most influential corporations on the continent. And, finally, almost two-thirds of Canada's total exports, and more than two-thirds of her imports are to and from the United States.

In Ross and Hartman's analysis there are five principal features of industrial life common to both Canada and the United States that account for the unusually high total incidence of strikes characteristic of the North American pattern.

First, "mass unionization is fairly recent, and mature labor-management relations are still in the course of development in a number of major industries". 3/

Labour in both Canada and the United States has been especially difficult to organize for a number of reasons: high rates of immigration, as well as mass migrations from rural areas to urban-industrial centres; language and ethnic diversity of the labour force; the high mobility of the population; and the like. Employers, for the most part, presented an intense, and prolonged and at times violent opposition to unions. Up to the latter 1930's, generally less than 15% of non-agricultural paid labour in either country was unionized. Not until after World War II did the percentage in both countries reach the present level of approximately one-third. This is still considerably below the proportion in most comparably industrialized nations.

Second, "organizational and leadership rivalries have been very prominent in the labor movements and have been prosecuted in exuberant fashion."

Such divisions have been even more characteristic of Canada than of the United States. Divisions that developed in the latter, as between the American Federation of Labor and the Knights of Labor in the 1880's and 1890's, between the AFL and various United States left-wing movements such as the American Labor Union and the Industrial Workers of the World early in this century, and between the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) from the mid-1930's to the mid-1950's, all extended into Canada. In addition, nationalistic, anti-American labour movements have been formed at various times in Canada, such as the Canadian Federation of Labour, the all-Canadian Congress of Labour, and the French-speaking Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour (now called the Canadian National Trades Union, (CNTU)).

Third, "the structure of collective bargaining is very decentralized".

Unlike most European countries, more than two-thirds of all collective bargaining agreements on the North American continent are between individual employing firms and union locals. There is very little industry-wide or multi-employer bargaining on a nation-wide scale. Most such bargaining is on a regional scale and, far more frequently, on a local city or metropolitan basis.

Fourth, "neither country has a strong or dominant labor party."

In the United States, for a number of reasons involving the complex political and governmental structure of that country, the main body of organized labour, the AFL, and later the merged AFL—CIO, has followed a policy of political neutrality. It has functioned as a pressure group within the two established parties and opposed attempts to form a separate labour or socialist party. Organized labour in Canada adhered to much the same sort of policy until World War II. Since then it has followed a somewhat more independent line. The moderately socialist party, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), was officially endorsed by one major labour federation, the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL), while the other, the Trades and Labour Congress (TLC), remained officially neutral. Following the merger of the AFL and CIO in the United States in 1955, and of the TLC and CCL in Canada in 1956, the new Canadian Labour Congress formed closer bonds of mutual support with the CCF, which was re-organized and re-named the New Democratic Party, (NDP). So far, however, it has failed to win a majority of organized labour's vote, let alone that of labour generally in this country.

For a number of reasons, wage earners in both countries have been unable to achieve their aspirations for economic and social gains through

"political action". They have been impelled, therefore, to rely upon militant and aggressive trade unionism to achieve their aims. In the United States and Canada, to a far greater degree than in other industrialized nations, workers have sought job and income security and other benefits through collective bargaining pressure on employers, supported by strikes if necessary or convenient, rather than through social legislation.

Finally, "both countries generally permit collective bargaining controversies to be settled by trials of economic strength, although in Canada compulsory mediation procedure must be utilized first."

These are broad generalizations indeed and they serve to emphasize the close similarities in industrial relations and conflict patterns between Canada and the United States, even to the extent, according to Ross and Hartman, that they have one common "industrial relations system."

This conclusion is open to criticism on two main grounds. First, the comparisons between these two countries, and with others, are based on national "patterns" of industrial conflict. These in turn are measured by broad statistics for each nation as a whole, of numbers of strikes, of workers involved, and of man-days lost. From these are derived various nation-wide indices of "membership involvement", average duration of strikes, and the like, again for each nation as a whole.

Second, the strike statistics for each nation as a whole, as presented by Ross and Hartman, despite the author's stress on similarities, do show significant differences in pattern and intensity. This point will be examined later.

It is questionable, in the first place, how significant strike statistics on a nation-wide basis really are, except for certain very broad issues. For in Canada, above all, there are such pronounced regional divisions and differences as to make such "national patterns" almost meaningless in some respects. In most years, for instance, the divergence in strike behaviour between different provinces in Canada, even those most industrialized and having the largest proportions of organized labour, is greater or diverges more from the Canadian average or national pattern than the latter does from the national pattern in the United States and several other countries.

To pursue this point further: Canada has very pronounced natural geographic divisions into sharply different regions, as determined by various topographical, climatic and other features. These regions have developed quite different economies and industrial structures and have experienced widely differing rates of economic growth and population increase. Wide inequalities in wage rates and per capita incomes, notably as between the Maritimes or Quebec on the one hand and Central Canada or British Columbia on the other, have persisted for decades.

These geographic and economic or industrial divisions have been further accentuated by 1) the highly decentralized political and governmental structure, in which the provinces have retained prior jurisdiction over labour, resources and industries within their respective boundaries; 2) religious, cultural and linguistic differences. These are particularly important as between Ontario and Quebec, which together account for the major shares of industry, employment and trade union membership in the country; and 3) the highly decentralized structure of the trade union movement. In Canada there is no such degree of centralized control of union

headquarters over their local or regional branches, on a national basis, as there is in the United States.

As a result of all these, the different regions or provinces, particularly those accounting for a major proportion of organized labour, have widely varying industrial relations systems and patterns of industrial conflict. These tend to make a "national" system or pattern a rather meaningless abstraction. The main provinces have markedly different industrial structures and occupational mixes, and different union and employer groups acting as pace-makers or pattern-setters for "carrying the ball" in strikes or lockouts. And they have somewhat divergent values, goals and constraints as regards such issues as wages, hours, working conditions, union security, and laws governing labour relations. These divergences are even wider as regards such broad questions as radical or conservative political views, labour political action or inaction, and traditions of harmony or of conflict in labour-management relations.

Little wonder, therefore, that there are and have been pronounced differences in the incidence and patterns of industrial conflict as between the main regions and provinces across the nation. One is led to conclude, therefore, that any portrayal of industrial unrest and conflict in Canada, and any examination of causal factors, must focus on diverse regional contexts rather than on broad national developments.

It is all too easy, of course, to exaggerate the degree and extent of such regional differences. There are a number of special Canadian characteristics that virtually all regions have in common to some degree, as well as some that are unique to certain regions. The distinct culture of French Canada is outstanding in this respect. These all render Canadian society different from the American in certain important respects.

Such factors have had an important impact on industrial relations in this country. While Ross and Hardman, as noted, stress the similarities between Canada and the United States in this regard, there are important differences even when confining the analysis to broad national statistics as these authors do. One fact that stands out is that workers, and particularly trade union members, have been far less strike-prone in Canada than in the United States over the past half century or more, even in periods when they were relatively more highly unionized. From World War I until 1937, when the CIO's organizing campaign was gaining momentum, a higher percentage of non-agricultural paid workers was unionized in Canada than in the United States. Canada did not regain parity with the United States in this regard until 1948. Since then union membership as a percentage of total non-agricultural employment has remained about equal in the two countries. 4/ As measured by all the various indices used in Ross and Hartman's analysis, however, despite the higher percentage of union members in Canada, the incidence of strikes has been considerably higher in the United States in all but a few years. Only in average duration of strikes, that is, in working days lost per striker, has Canada exceeded the United States. This was the case during most years of the 1920's and, again, since 1945. 5/

A similar pattern has applied to the incidence of violence and illegality in labour disputes. It has been far higher in Canada over the past sixty years or more than most of us have been led to assume, and considerably greater than in most comparable industrialized countries overseas. But it appears to have been considerably less in frequency and scope than in the United States during this period. This is of course difficult to establish or prove statistically, as noted earlier, because of the large differences in size of population and in frequency and incidence of strikes in the two countries.

Certainly Canada has never experienced strikes in particular industries comparable to those in Homestead, Pa., and Pullman, Ill., in the 1890's, the "Ludlow massacre" in Colorado in 1914, or the "Memorial Day Massacre" in the Chicago area during the "Little Steel" strike of 1937. Only on a few relatively rare occasions, as in the coal mining strikes of 1912-14 on Vancouver Island, B.C. and in 1924 in Nova Scotia, in the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919, and in the Regina Riot of 1935, have there been mob action, violence, the use of armed police and military forces, personal injuries and deaths comparable in scale and intensity to the large and violent conflicts that the United States has experienced at various times.

The pattern as well as the scope of violence has also been notably different in some important respects in the two countries. Mob action or "vigilantism" by local businessmen opposing trade unions appears to have been relatively rare in Canada. Likewise there has been less use of professional labour spies and strike-breakers, though this is difficult to prove conclusively. Among unions also there appears to have been less internal corruption and racketeering, and less violence and intimidation in internal administration as well as in jurisdictional disputes. A few organizations in Canada, of course, such as the Seafarers' International Union under the administration of Hal Banks (a United States "import" of the latter 1940's), stand out as notable exceptions.

There are a number of broad economic, political, social and cultural factors one could point to as explaining these differences in behaviour-patterns between Canadian and American workers and employers. There is, to begin with, the greater carryover in Canada of British political and social traditions, with their well-known respect for law and order, the

"genius for compromise", and resulting inhibitions against engaging in overt conflict. As pointed out in an earlier study:

Canada's history and many of her traditions are different from, and in some respects conflicting with, those of the United States. The latter changed her status from colony to nation by severing her ties with Britain suddenly and violently, by revolutionary war. And less than a century later she had to undergo a protracted and costly civil war to maintain her unity as a nation. Canada, by contrast, attained nationhood and a measure of unity only gradually, through a long series of compromises and concessions, and remained, until 1867, and later in some respects, in a state of colonial dependence upon Britain for her main markets, for supplies of various kinds, for capital and skilled personnel, for military protection and political guidance. 6/

Again, to the extent that the frontier played an important role in the formation of national character, as Frederick Jackson Turner and other noted United States historians claim, frontier life and frontier traditions were quite different in the histories of the two countries. In the United States from colonial times and on throughout the nineteenth century, large numbers of people continually settled along the frontier beyond the boundaries of government or of recognized law and order. Such settlement was accompanied by protracted and bloody conflicts with Indians as well as among various groups of settlers themselves. In Canada, by contrast frontier settlement was limited and was kept under the fairly close supervision of governments, either directly or through "chosen instruments" such as the Hudson Bay Company.

It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that such differences in historical experience would inculcate, among succeeding generations, differences in the intensity and scope of conflict, violence and illegality, in industrial relations as in other contexts. In the United States, far more than in Canada, there has been the strongly imbued tradition of

"settling accounts privately", by violent or illegal means if necessary, via the "six-gun", the lynch mob, and the "vigilante" group. Correspondingly, that country also has had the highest incidence of homicide and crimes of violence of any leading industrial nation.

The noted United States sociologist, Seymour M. Lipset, pursues this line of thought further in a comparative analysis of trade unionism and industrial relations in the United States, Canada, Australia, Great Britain and Western Europe generally. 7/ The high incidence of industrial conflict in the United States, and of violence and illegality in industrial relations as in other contexts in that country, he attributes largely to the relative absence of strong class traditions. In most western European countries, employers—at least the larger ones—have had a strong sense of identity as members of a class having a special status and deep-seated traditions of loyalty and they are bound to certain common rules of behaviour befitting members of their class. Wage earners and union members, too, have tended to view themselves as members of the working class and to envisage their individual economic and political advancement as inseparable from that of their class as a whole. In the United States, by contrast, the prevailing ideology is one of competitive individualism or "free private enterprise". Each employer views his own or his company's relationship with other employers as being essentially competitive, striving for economic gain at their expense or that of the public if necessary. Individual workers and union members are likewise imbued with a philosophy of competitive individualism. In line with the prevailing business ethic and philosophy of the employers with whom they have to deal, unions have tended to follow a policy of "free enterprise" or "business unionism" in pursuit of their private group interests. Union leaders have been prone to see their role and responsibility primarily in terms of maximizing the size, power and status of

their own organizations, and the economic and social gains of their own members, in competition with, or if need be, at the expense of, other unions and other groups in the economy. Such factors largely explain the highly segmented pattern of collective bargaining in the United States and the high incidence of overt conflict as well as of violence and illegality.

The organizational and ideological dominance of Canadian unions and employers by American parent bodies, and the increasing Americanization of Canadian society generally in recent decades, Lipset finds, have contributed to a growing similarity in patterns of industrial conflict. These have been modified by the greater carryover in Canada of British traditions, class and otherwise.

The Canadian sociologist John Porter, in his monumental study of Canada's social structure 8/, also finds a more rigid system of class stratification in this country as compared to the United States. It conduces to a lesser bargaining power and status for organized labour and other lower-income or middle-income groups, and a correspondingly lower incidence of overt industrial conflict. Positions of ownership, control and power in business, industry, finance and government are concentrated, to a greater degree than in the United States, in the hands of a relatively small élite of English-speaking and Protestant background. The country's ethnic diversity of population, the long continued tension and recurrent conflict on the political plane between French and English-speaking Canada, and the highly decentralized political and governmental structure, have prevented the achievement of effective public regulation or control over major economic power groups. Inadequate educational facilities, among other limitations, keep "vertical" social mobility and opportunities for advancement

in occupational status more limited for lower income or lower class groups in Canada than in the United States. 9/

Business and industry, as Gideon Rosenbluth and others have found, are much more "concentrated", in the monopolistic or oligopolistic sense of the term, in Canada than in the United States. 10/ This high degree of concentration arose partly from the policy of governments in Canada, even more than in the United States, of granting huge subsidies, in cash or in land and other resources, or monopolistic concessions in certain markets, to large concerns as a means for stimulating rapid economic growth. The Hudson's Bay Company and the Canadian Pacific Railway were outstanding examples of these. There are a number of major export industries in which a high degree of monopoly has been based upon large-scale production and single-company or oligopolistic control over resources found only in limited areas. Such are, for instance, the mining, smelting and processing of asbestos, gypsum, nickel, aluminum, lead and zinc. More important in the aggregate have been various industries producing mainly for the domestic market, and they are protected by tariffs and other trade barriers. By far the major part of Canada's manufacturing plant, for foreign as well as domestic markets, was not developed until the twentieth century. Unlike most industry in Great Britain, the United States and other highly industrialized nations, therefore, Canada's leading industrial firms for the most part did not go through the various pioneering stages of growth and change from small to large-scale operations. They were large from the beginning, as modern mass production techniques already developed in Great Britain, the United States and elsewhere were applied to Canadian resources and output. Most of the production capacity today represents United States capital. Large-scale techniques in a country having a small population and

limited purchasing-power left room for only one or a few firms in each of a wide list of major industries. Monopolistic concentration from such causes has been enhanced, as a number of special investigations have shown, by the prevalence of combines and collusive agreements.

Governments in Canada, for reasons outlined above, have been unable or unwilling to provide effective regulation or control over such developments. According to Rosenbluth:

The most important feature of present government policies in the field of business regulation is that they do not treat the giant corporation as a phenomenon calling for social control....In fact, there are few effective restrictions on the activities of large corporations, and they do not have to give an account of their activities to any one. 11/

The relative bargaining power of employers vis-à-vis unions was probably further strengthened by the highly specialized structure of the Canadian economy in so far as it tended to limit workers' choices of alternative employment in case of conflict. Moreover, the Canadian economy, specializing as it has done in the large-scale production and export of a few types of raw materials and semi-finished goods with which to pay for a large volume and variety of imports, has rendered it highly unstable and vulnerable to severe seasonal and cyclical fluctuations in prices, output and employment. The record seems to indicate that such fluctuations weakened unions far more than they did employers.

All in all, therefore, industrial relations in Canada until well into World War II presented a picture in which employers in most industries were relatively much more powerful, vis-à-vis unions, than were their counterparts in the United States. This could go far towards explaining the much lower incidence of strikes in Canada. And this, along with certain

inhibitions incurred by the stronger carryover of British traditions of class, and of law and order, helps explain the lesser incidence of violence and illegality on the part of employers in the course of industrial conflict.

Employers in Canada are and have been no less hostile to unions than were their United States counterparts. Indeed, the record seems to indicate that they were even more hostile in some respects. Suspicion and hostility towards "alien", "Yankee-dominated" unions provided, until fairly recently, a special rationale in some circles for intransigent opposition to organized labour. And, particularly among the larger concerns in primary and manufacturing industries, employers in Canada succeeded far longer than in the United States in refusing to recognize and bargain collectively with unions. But being in a stronger position vis-à-vis unions, perhaps they felt less impelled to resort to the devious and frequently violent means employed so frequently in the United States to resist organization of their employees.

Again, this is not to assert that Canadian employers have been any less ready to resort to violence than their counterparts in the United States. On the contrary, as the long history that follows brings out, employers in Canada seem to have been all too ready at times to call upon governments to support them in their struggles with organized labour and to sanction the use of force and violence by police or military personnel where they felt their interests to be seriously threatened in industrial conflict situations. The main difference would appear to have been that Canadian employers were more inclined to obey the letter of the law, particularly in the decades prior to World War II when the law was strongly

tilted in their favour, and to depend upon legally constituted authorities, rather than their own resources, to apply force and violence in the measure required to win such conflicts.

In this regard, again, legislation and government policy in Canada, until well on into World War II, appear in retrospect to have been particularly favourable to employers as against unions in situations of industrial strife, to a degree exceeding even that in the United States. The highly decentralized federal structure of Canadian government, as noted, has inhibited effective regulation of large business or industrial concerns as regards price and output policy and the like. It has also prevented the federal government from enacting, in any but a very limited field of employment, various measures of protective labour legislation governing such matters as minimum wages, maximum hours, and minimum standards of working conditions. Divisions and conflicts in jurisdiction between federal and provincial governments have also prevented effective planning and execution of coordinated programs of fiscal, monetary and ancillary policies for maintaining full employment and stable economic growth. And, as noted earlier, economic instability and unemployment have tended to weaken the position of unions more than of employers.

On the other hand, governments at all levels in Canada, from the turn of the century on, did participate forcefully in settling labour disputes, strikes and demonstrations. And here again, until well on into World War II, government policy appears, on balance to have favoured employers rather than unions. In comparison to the United States, legislation and policy in Canada for more than 50 years have shown a marked preoccupation with attempting to settle disputes and prevent strikes, rather than with protecting the

rights, liberties and prerogatives of the contending parties. It has placed major emphasis on compulsory intervention and restriction of unions' and employers' freedom of action as a means for settling conflicts. In practice, however, until well on into World War II, such compulsory intervention favoured employers more than unions. While restricting the freedom of workers to strike, it placed no effective requirements on employers to recognize or deal with unions, and provided the latter little or no protection from such employer tactics as discriminatory discharge, blacklisting, and recruitment of strike-breakers. Where violence did develop in the course of labour disputes, police or military forces were used in the overwhelming majority of cases to protect employers' property and freedom of action to recruit strike-breakers, rather than to protect strikers' rights to safeguard their jobs. In many cases this one-sided type of intervention was decisive in enabling employers to defeat unions' efforts to organize and achieve recognized status.

This particular kind of bias may have been due primarily to the above-noted carryover of British traditions, with their emphasis on avoiding overt conflict and maintaining law and order; and, prior to World War II, as noted, the law emphasized protection of property more than labour's job rights and freedom of action. Or, again, it may have been a by-product essentially of Canadian history and environment. This author in an earlier publication interpreted the situation as follows:

Canada's preoccupation with attempting to prevent strikes and lock-outs by legislative means may be attributed, in part, to the vulnerability of a national economy that has always depended heavily upon foreign trade and specialized to an extreme degree in the large-scale production and export of raw materials and semi-finished goods. Such circumstances tend to generate an exaggerated view of the damage that strikes may bring. In this regard Canada appears to have much in common with Australia and New Zealand. Or again, this aspect of

Canada's industrial relations policy might be interpreted as merely another facet of the national "temperament" or "character". Public opinion in a nation the unity of which requires a delicate balance of relationships among various distinct regional, ethnic or class interests is prone to view strikes, or any form of overt conflict for that matter, as a danger that threatens to destroy the social fabric. 12/

The boundaries between federal and provincial jurisdiction remained amorphous and ill-defined until the mid-1920's. For the first two-and-a-half decades of this century the federal government intervened in hundreds of labour disputes in a wide variety of industries. As a result of certain Privy Council decisions in the early 1920's, the federal jurisdiction over labour matters, including disputes and strikes, was sharply circumscribed. The provinces, in their legislative policy in this area, continued the federal tradition of compulsory intervention and delay.

The federal government, however, continued to play a prominent role in labour disputes, strikes and labour demonstrations through the use of military and police forces. There are no such sharp restrictions on the activities of federal police forces in Canada as there are in the United States. Federal forces--in the form of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police--have, by arrangement with the appropriate levels of government assumed the responsibilities for maintaining law and order at the provincial and local level in many areas. The RCMP has thus become a highly pervasive force in Canadian society. Its presence has been felt with enough force to tip the scales of battle in hundreds of strikes and labour demonstrations. The particular image of the R C M P, and of the federal government itself, which this situation has generated in the eyes of many in the ranks of organized labour, in all probability has had a profound effect on the climate of labour relations in this country.

So far, the generally lower incidence of strikes and of violence and illegality in labour disputes in Canada as compared to the United States, has been explained as arising largely from the relatively greater strength of employers vis-à-vis organized labour in this country, as well as the greater carryover of British traditions, particularly among employers, and the greater effort exerted by governments at all levels to settle disputes and prevent strikes.

What about Canadian workers themselves, and particularly union members? Does their lesser participation in strikes, as compared to their United States counterparts, indicate that they are and have been less militant and that dissatisfaction and unrest have been less prevalent in this country than in the United States? Such conclusions would seem unwarranted.

In the first place, dissatisfaction and unrest would seem to be endemic to the industrial scene in Canada for several reasons. For one thing, as noted earlier, opportunities for promotion or substantial improvement in occupational status have generally been lower for Canadian than for American workers except, of course, such specially disadvantaged groups as Negroes and Latin Americans. Furthermore, wage rates and per capita incomes in Canada are and have long been 20 to 30% below United States levels, even among workers employed in the same industries, doing the same types of jobs, and belonging to branches of the same "international" unions. In view of the extensive travel to and communication with the United States, and the large amounts spent on advertising, not to mention the organizational and ideological ties between Canadian and American unions, the inequalities in rates of pay, fringe benefits, hours of work and other items should logically

be expected to have generated widespread resentment and unrest among Canadian workers.

A number of features of the Canadian environment, as pointed out, have generally made it more difficult for Canadian than American workers to organize into unions. Nevertheless, during most years since the turn of the century, as noted earlier, a higher proportion of non-agricultural paid labour has been organized in Canada than in the United States. 13/ These facts would seem to indicate that Canadian workers in general have been more amenable to, or had more incentive to, or felt a more compelling need to join unions than did American workers. The fact that in most years they participated to a far smaller degree in strikes may merely indicate that they faced greater difficulties and disadvantages in doing so, or expressed their dissatisfaction and unrest in other forms, as compared to workers and union members in the United States.

Not only were Canadian workers faced with the relatively greater size and strength of employers and with government policies that were hostile to overt action by organized labour, but various changes and trends in the composition of the Canadian labour force also presented special difficulties. For one thing, the rural element in Canada until recently comprised a much larger percentage of the total population than in the United States. The presence of a large, under-employed labour force in agriculture and other primary industries, and large annual rural-urban migrations, faced union members periodically with severe competition for jobs and, in labour disputes, with strike-breakers. This was even more the case with immigration which, during the decade prior to World War I, during the 1920's, and again during the two decades following World War II, comprised far larger

percentage additions to the resident labour force year by year than the United States experienced.

Immigration to a considerable degree was counterbalanced by the large volume of emigration, mainly to the United States. Emigration, of wage earners at least, may have been to a large extent motivated by unrest and dissatisfaction over lower wages and longer hours in Canadian as compared to American industry. That is to say, it may have served as a substitute form of action to strikes and, by acting as a sort of "steam valve" that "took the heat off" industrial unrest, helped account for the lower incidence of strikes and lockouts, and of accompanying violence, in Canada than in the United States.

In sum, then, Canada during the past sixty years or more has presented the picture of a nation characterized by sharp contrasts in structure, traditions and attitudes that tend to generate considerable internal conflict, particularly on the industrial scene.

On the one hand, Canadian society has been peculiarly "open", "permissive", and dynamic in some respects. Canada is a very large and still relatively under-developed country, rich in natural resources but limited in population, which has appeared to offer manifold opportunities to the individual for economic and social advancement. Canadians for the most part have been far more receptive to mass immigration from abroad than the people of most other countries, and to the large-scale influx of foreign capital, technologies and ideas generally, particularly from the United States. Immigrants in this country have been subjected to far less pressure to assimilate and conform than in the United States. At the same time, the Canadian population itself has been highly mobile. Emigration, largely

to the United States, has almost equalled the volume of immigration from abroad over the past century or more. Foreign, predominantly United States, ownership and control of Canadian industry and resources have grown to the point that many Canadians are fearful that their country will lose its sovereign identity.

The impact of the United States, with its vastly greater population, wealth, power and influence generally, has been equally or more important in its social or cultural aspects. Family, friendship and organizational ties, increased travel and improved transportation facilities across the border, and increasingly pervasive and effective media of communication such as magazines, newspapers and comic strips, radio and television broadcasts, have exerted a dominant and growing influence, in Canada, of United States ideas and ideologies, values and behaviour-patterns. And, more specifically as regards the subject of industrial relations, manifold business and trade union ties between the two countries have tended to imbue Canadian employers and workers with the militant and aggressive egalitarian, individualistic and competitive ideologies of their counterparts, in the United States, and their more tolerant attitudes towards overt conflict and violence.

On the other hand, the Canadian economic and social system, as John Porter and others have brought out, is peculiarly rigid and "closed" in some respects. There continues to be, in English-speaking Canada, a carry-over from the nineteenth century (and in French Canada from the Ancien régime) of aristocratic class traditions regarding a properly hierarchical social order. Canadian industry is highly concentrated and oligopolistic in its key sectors, and a small, predominantly English-speaking elite has

dominated the main positions of power in the business and financial structure for several decades. Upward social mobility and occupational "climbing" among lower and middle-income groups have been limited by inadequate educational facilities and other shortcomings. Various internal divisions in the nation, coupled with a highly decentralized system of government, as noted earlier, have made impossible effective public regulation of the private or corporate business sector, much less effective national economic planning. While Canadians on the whole have enjoyed relatively rapid economic growth and rising real incomes since the turn of the century, such growth has followed a highly unstable pattern. It has been characterized by bursts of expansion, followed by periods of severe depression and unemployment, in which the burdens of deprivation have been very unequally shared.

Another focal point of aspiration and unavoidable frustration, as noted earlier, is the inequality in incomes and living standards between equally qualified Canadian and American workers doing the same types of jobs, and often belonging to branches of the same unions. With average per capita output and real income in Canada some 25 to 30% below that of the United States, many Canadians have "champagne tastes on beer incomes."

In the face of such contradictions and contrasts, widespread frustration, unrest and conflict appear to be, and have been, endemic in the Canadian economic and social structure, particularly in the sphere of labour-employer relations. They also tend to generate a somewhat ambivalent attitude to authority. Canadians, as noted, are probably on the whole more orderly and law-abiding in their day-to-day lives and less inclined to engage in overt or violent conflict than are Americans. Periods of

widespread tension, crisis or breakdown, however, have occasionally generated intense and violent conflict in Canada. It is often forgotten, for instance, that elements of Canada's armed forces, while having a very creditable record overseas during both world wars, on both occasions engaged in mutinies, riots, looting and violence when hostilities ceased. On the domestic civilian scene, likewise, labour unrest and conflict have occasionally erupted into scenes of large-scale rioting and violence, armed suppression by police or military forces, with the accompanying property damage, personal injuries and deaths. Outstanding examples of these were several coal miners' strikes prior to and after World War I, the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919, and the strike of relief camp workers in British Columbia that culminated in the Regina Riot of 1935. The wave of strikes during 1965-66 which featured scattered instances of violence and illegality might perhaps be interpreted as the most recent manifestation of a recurrent pattern of labour unrest and conflict that seems to be deeply imbedded in the Canadian industrial scene.

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CHAPTER II

THE GOOD OLD DAYS: 1900-13

There is a widespread tendency, particularly among older people who have gone through two world wars, inflation and a devastating depression, and who now face the threat of a nuclear holocaust, to look back through a roseate haze and view the years prior to World War I as a sort of Golden Age. To labour historians, however, it is generally viewed as a classic period of widespread unrest and violence. This picture was generally true of Western Europe and the North American continent.

A number of phenomena on an international scale contributed to this state of affairs. Revolutionary discoveries in various branches of science and industry, mass migration to and exploitation of newly settled territories, and other major developments during the nineteenth century had generated an unprecedented rate of economic growth and change in Western Europe and the North American continent. Most countries in the western world had already been transformed, or were being so, from predominantly rural to urban-industrial economies, and the scale of operations was rapidly increasing in an accelerating "Industrial Revolution." Among the more literate segments of the population, as well as in popular attitudes and philosophies, there was an optimism and faith in the inevitability of progress that can

only seem fantastic today. This was generally true of Socialists, even Marxians in the ultimate sense, as well as of orthodox economists, business men and other supporters of the status quo.

Beneath this apparently healthy facade, however, as Barbara Tuchman 1/ brings out in her comprehensive portrayal of the pre-War I era, there were serious maladjustments and strains in western society, which generated mass unrest, conflict and violence. These culminated in the wholesale slaughter and destruction of World War I. The very rapidity of industrial growth and change created glaring "cultural lags" in which archaic attitudes, traditions, institutions and laws appropriate to predominantly agricultural, and in many countries feudal, societies were carried over into dynamic urban-industrial contexts in which they were inappropriate and inoperable.

Rapid economic growth and inflation on a world-wide scale, from the mid-nineties through World War I, were accompanied by mergers and consolidations and increasing concentrations of wealth and income. It was a period in which huge fortunes were being made, the Era of Robber Barons. It was accompanied by magnificent pomp and ostentatious display, as pictured by Thorstein Veblen in The Theory of the Leisure Class. At the other end of the scale was widespread and grinding poverty, particularly in a period when prices generally were rising more rapidly than wages. New and revolutionary theories and programs for action were being formulated, notably those of the Anarchists and the Marxists, and in desperate circumstances were giving rise to violent deeds. This was an era in which no fewer than six heads of state as well as numerous lesser dignitaries in various countries were assassinated, mostly by anarchists, in the twenty years prior to 1914. They included the Empress of Austria, the King of Italy, the

Presidents of the United States and of France, and the Prime Ministers of Russia and of Spain. 2/

Unionism for the first time was becoming a mass movement in the real sense, with unskilled and semi-skilled labour becoming newly-organized into broad "industrial" unions. Labour and Socialist parties were beginning for the first time to present a serious challenge to the existing political establishments in leading industrial nations. Strikes of unprecedented magnitude and impact accompanied these developments, occasionally reaching the proportions of nation-wide or "general" strikes, as in Belgium in 1893 and Sweden in 1904. Employers for the most part, with the prevailing carry-over of nineteenth-century class attitudes and privileges concerning status and authority, resisted these threats stubbornly and violently. A view perhaps typical of an important minority of large employers was expressed by George F. Baer, President of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, and probably the most important official among the railroad-coal mining corporations in the anthracite region of Pennsylvania. In reply to a letter written by a coal miner asking for some minor concessions to end the protracted and bitter anthracite strike of 1902, Mr. Baer wrote, in part, as follows:

The rights and interests of the laboring man will be protected and cared for—not by the labor agitators, but by the Christian men to whom God in His infinite wisdom has given control of the property interests of the country, and upon the management of which so much depends. 3/

Employers could usually count upon protection and support from governments, the courts, and military and police forces in a real or threatened crisis. A number of major conflicts, notably the Homestead strike against the Carnegie steel interests, and the Pullman strike in railroads in the United States, as well as several strikes in Europe, generated violence,

military suppression, injury and death on a scale approaching that of a minor civil war. 4/ A May Day demonstration in 1891 by textile workers in Fourmies, a small industrial town in northern France, was charged by police and ten people were killed, including several children. In the course of a general strike in 1893 for manhood suffrage in Belgium led by Socialist unions, soldiers killed twelve participants. When the Pullman strike in 1894 stopped trains and the mail in the United States, Judge William Howard Taft, later Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, wrote to his wife:

It will be necessary for the military to kill some of the mob before the trouble can be stayed. They have only killed six... as yet. This is hardly enough to make an impression. 5/

Canada, as a peculiarly "open" country in some respects, and an integral part of the western world's economy, was affected to varying degrees by these multifarious and unsettling developments emanating from the United States and abroad. Various economic and social developments within the country during this period contributed to rising unrest and conflict.

For a number of reasons, economic growth was disappointingly slow in Canada for more than a decade following completion of the trans-continental Canadian Pacific Railway in 1886. The situation changed rapidly from the late 1890's on. A combination of favourable circumstances--the end of the land frontier in the United States; the development of frost-and rust - resistant wheat; a sizeable increase in the world's gold supply; inflation; and a rising demand for food and raw materials from abroad--all these and other developments contributed to an unprecedented rate of economic growth in Canada from the turn of the century to World War I. Immigration reached record levels to a peak of more than 400,000 in 1912 alone, and the

Canadian population as a whole grew by more than three million in less than a decade and a half, from scarcely more than five million at the turn of the century. The most spectacular development was the mass migration to and settlement of the Prairies, and the large and rapid increase in wheat production. By the outbreak of the war Canada had become one of the world's major grain producers.

Accompanying these developments were record levels of capital investment, particularly in railroads, with the attempted building of two new transcontinental railway lines; in housing and social capital, transportation, storage and processing facilities, in the Prairie provinces; and in manufacturing, the output of which more than doubled in value in the space of a decade, stimulated in large part by the spectacular expansion in the West.

With the wisdom of hindsight one can see that this broad pattern of growth, while basically healthy in terms of the economic and political integration of the country, and seeming to justify the widespread optimism of the time, was also one likely to generate numerous strains, maladjustments and conflicts. From what statistics are available there appears to have been an almost continuous and occasionally rapid rise in prices from the late 1890's on and, due mainly perhaps to the huge volume of immigration and consequent rapid increase in labour supply, a continuous lag of wages behind prices. This was the era of "robber barons", spectacular large fortunes and conspicuous expenditure. Particularly was this the case in Canada in a context of rapid economic growth, new resource exploitation and development, and rising land values. Intense resentment was generated in numerous cases by the prevailing government policy of making large grants of land and resources, and monopolistic concessions, to large companies as a means of attracting capital investment and achieving rapid industrial growth.

In general, this was a combination conducive to labour unrest and strikes in Canada, as in the United States. Massive internal shifts of population, accompanied by large-scale immigration from various sources, tended to bring social disorganization and conflict in their wake. Tension between various racial or ethnic groups tended to complicate and exacerbate labour-employer and inter-union conflict in many cases, particularly where certain immigrant groups were used as a source of cheap labour or as strike-breakers. Generally, the accretion of large numbers of displaced or uprooted people, or déracinés, tended to create a climate provocative of conflict in any case.

These features of the pre-War I period were particularly apparent in the western provinces, especially British Columbia. From the turn of the century until World War II that province accounted for a disproportionate share of industrial unrest and conflict. While constituting only a very small proportion of all labour disputes, it is nonetheless significant that from 1901 to 1913, according to the Labour Gazette, there were 14 large strikes in widely separate localities across Canada in which one or more of the following occurred: riots and "mob violence"; property damage; personal injury; and in two cases, deaths. Eleven of these strikes led to the involvement of militia or regular military forces. By provinces, British Columbia alone accounted for six such disputes; Ontario accounted for three and Quebec two; Manitoba and Nova Scotia each experienced one; and one, a railway strike, was interprovincial in scope.

Organized labour in Canada underwent a process of rapid growth and change during this period. By the turn of the century it had become solidly established on a truly nation-wide scale, albeit faced with various regional

schisms and conflicts. In the United States the craft union-oriented American Federation of Labor, with its relatively conservative "business union" approach, had risen to dominance. Its predecessor, the Knights of Labor, had virtually disappeared. In Canada the Trades and Labour Congress, the union affiliates of which were largely subsidiary branches of AFL "international" unions, had similarly achieved dominance. At its 1902 Convention the TLC took the signal step of declaring "dual" and therefore refusing affiliation to any union in Canada that conflicted in jurisdiction with any AFL affiliate. This included most branches of the Knights of Labor as well as numerous purely Canadian organizations.

The TLC, however, while dominating the organized labour scene in Canada for more than a half-century, was faced with various rival labour movements. Branches of the Knights of Labour, after expulsion from the TLC, joined with other dissident organizations in 1904 to form the Canadian Federation of labour. Its main appeal was opposition to United States domination of Canadian unions. In Nova Scotia the Provincial Workmen's Association was dominant among organized labour in the coal and steel industries. Just prior to the War, when faced with displacement by the AFL—United Mine Workers, it affiliated with the CFL. In Quebec, elements of the clergy were engaged in organizing new and separate syndicats catholiques in opposition to the "secular" unions of the AFL-TLC and CFL. British Columbia, and to a lesser extent Alberta, were centres of organization in Canada for radical, anti-AFL labour movements, notably the Western Federation of Miners, the United Brotherhood of Railway Employees and, of relatively minor importance as compared to the United States, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). These various opposition groups directly or indirectly accounted for a disproportionate share of the strikes that occurred in Canada prior to the War. 6/

Employers, for their part, in Canada as in the United States, appeared on the whole to have been hostile to unions and resisted recognizing them. Particularly strong opposition was expressed towards "alien", "American-dominated" unions and their "foreign agitators", whether affiliated to the AFL and TLC or to dissident radical organizations. While the wage issue was central in most disputes, in a large fraction, if not the majority, it was accompanied by the demand for union recognition. The most bitter and prolonged strikes and lockouts, particularly in coal mining and railway construction work, developed over the refusal of employers to deal with unions, and their propensity to engage in discriminatory actions against the more active unionists. They were able to resist unionization and win most of the major struggles mainly, perhaps, because of the huge volume of immigration. In regions such as the Maritimes and Quebec, in which relatively few immigrants settled, the existence of large numbers of underemployed in primary industries provided alternative labour supplies, and in case of conflict, strike-breakers. Understandably, under these circumstances, strikes and lockouts at times generated considerable violence and property damage.

The role of governments in most industrial disputes in Canada prior to World War I appears to have been at best equivocal and, on balance, discriminatory in favour of employers. The Trade Union Act of 1873, and similar legislation at the provincial level in later decades, legalized unions, freed them from the status of "conspiracies" and allowed strikes for legitimate objectives. From the turn of the century on, the federal government experimented with legislation providing for official intervention in industrial disputes to seek settlements. Such intervention was at first on a voluntary basis, and later compulsory. The legislation, on balance,

appears to have operated to the detriment of organized labour. While putting restrictions on labour's right to strike, picket and boycott, it placed no comparable obligations on employers to recognize or bargain with unions, and provided the latter little if any protection against offensive or retaliatory actions by employers, such as firing and blacklisting union members, hiring strike-breakers, and the like. The prevailing government policy appeared to be one largely of expediency, that is, of settling or ending strikes by any or all means in the short run, rather than seeking to promote long-run stability on the basis of union recognition and collective bargaining. In a number of notable cases, under the then Deputy Minister of Labour and later Prime Minister of Canada, the late Right Honourable W.L. Mackenzie King, disputes-settlement policy amounted to promoting "company unions", or "employee representation", at the expense of bona fide labour organizations.

A number of explanations have been offered to account for and justify this apparently one-sided intervention of the federal government in labour disputes, and the types of settlement formulae so frequently resorted to, to the disadvantage of organized labour. It would be a gross over-simplification to brand the policy and its main architect, MacKenzie King, as merely reactionary and anti-union, though the policy may have had this effect in many cases. The federal government did not intervene indiscriminately in all labour disputes in Canada. It focused its main dispute settlement efforts, rather, upon two industries in particular, namely, railways and coal mining. In these, strikes or other stoppages of operations were deemed to threaten major crises.

This was in line with the long established National Policy, so-called, the rudiments of which went back to Confederation or earlier. Railways

constituted Canada's vital lifeline, necessary to build and maintain a viable national economy. The first transcontinental line, the CPR, opened up the Prairies for large-scale farm settlement and population growth, thus making possible two-way, East-West shipment and exchange of goods and services. Grains and other Prairie produce could be shipped to both coasts, largely for export, and create a growing internal market for the manufactured goods of the industrial east, as well as lumber and other primary products from British Columbia.

This program for economic growth did not achieve its full momentum until the turn of the century, when Canada experienced an unprecedented rate of expansion, until shortly before World War I. Growing pressure on existing railway facilities was such that the construction of two additional transcontinental lines was undertaken. In view of the dependence of the railways on coal, as their main or sole source of power, and of the Prairies on coal as almost the sole available source of fuel for domestic heating and industrial purposes, the mining of this resource, particularly in Western Alberta and in British Columbia, was likewise deemed an industry of vital national importance. In view of these priorities, the federal government, as personified in MacKenzie King, its main mediator and architect of labour policy, was inclined to follow a pragmatic or opportunistic strategy of accepting any means for achieving immediate settlement of disputes and strikes in the railways and coal mines, even if it involved a considerable measure of compulsion that worked primarily to the disadvantage of organized labour as the weaker power group in most cases, and generated more widespread unrest and conflict in the long run.

Provincial and local governments, on balance, likewise appear to have favoured employers as against organized labour in situations of conflict. The law, as interpreted at the time, put a higher priority on protection of the employer's property and his right to carry on operations free from outside interference than it did on the rights of workers to organize, bargain collectively with employers, and protect their jobs. Employers on numerous occasions were authorized to hire special private police, supplementing regular police forces, to provide armed protection of company property and strike-breakers. Where these were deemed insufficient, on numerous occasions local or provincial authorities read the Riot Act or proclaimed Martial Law, banned public assemblies, and brought in militia or regular units of the armed forces.

Little wonder, then, that this era of industrial unrest left a long legacy of distrust of and hostility to governments and a contempt for the law among many in the ranks of organized labour. It was a legacy that was to generate recurrent trouble on a large scale in subsequent decades.

In discussing specific "areas" or "centres" of conflict, it is necessary again to attempt to distinguish those which were general across the country as distinct from those more or less unique to particular regions or localities. That is to say, the unprecedented rate of economic expansion in Canada in the pre-war period and the strains and maladjustments brought in its wake, affected all regions to some extent and generated some behaviour-patterns common to all. At the same time, however, their impact varied considerably upon regions differing widely in income, resource endowment, industrial structure, and other factors.

GENERAL

Among the industries in which similar patterns of conflict appeared on a national scale, construction, railways and to a lesser extent longshoring, were outstanding.

Construction

The construction industry accounted for a disproportionate share of all strikes and of workers involved in strikes in the pre-War I period, though , characteristic of the industry, most of the strikes were relatively small and of short duration. Adequate statistics on employment in the industry are lacking for this period, but it is perhaps a safe guess that it accounted for about the same percentage, or perhaps higher, of total employment as in the boom periods of the mid-1950's and 1960's, i.e. roughly 10% to 15%. According to Labour Gazette estimates, during 1901 to 1913, inclusive, the construction industry accounted for 468 strikes, or about 29% of the total, almost 26% of workers involved in strikes, and 16% of total man-days lost. 7/

To some degree this pattern was to be expected for this period. The building trades were among the first occupational groups to become unionized effectively in the United States and Canada and, among the more skilled trades at least, unions were well established and generally recognized in the main urban centres. The construction industry has long been one of the most sensitive to general cycles of expansion and contraction, and the magnitude of capital investment and population growth in the pre-War I period generated a construction boom of major proportions, particularly in Ontario and the western provinces. Characteristic of boom periods, there were

numerous small "protest" strikes of short duration and, periodically, larger and more prolonged "interest" disputes in which the main union demands were for wage increases and union security, i.e. closed shop or union shop and check-off arrangements.

There were also a number of special features generating conflict in the construction industry prior to World War I. There are no special studies or reports by investigating commissions, known to this writer, concerning labour conditions and industrial relations in the construction industry in the pre-War I period. Various scattered references and brief descriptions of various disputes as presented in the Labour Gazette, however, give the impression that conditions at that time were broadly similar to those later described in the Report by the Royal Commission on Labour-Management Relations in the Construction Industry in Ontario for the latter 1950's. 8/ The Report described such current features as the small scale of operations; ease of entry and high turnover of contractors in residential construction; the intense competition and downward pressure on contractors' bids, which in turn created pressure to reduce costs by exploiting labour; the vulnerability to such exploitation by large numbers of unskilled or semi-skilled workers of recent immigrant stock, who were unfamiliar with the language, laws and regulations of their adopted country; the conflict generated by the efforts of unions to organize these groups; and so on.

Such features of the construction industry were probably even more characteristic of the pre-War I period in Canada generally than of Metropolitan Toronto in the early 1960's, considering the comparatively much larger volume of immigration, the weaker position of unions, and the

relative absence of protective labour legislation. These factors, together with the magnitude of the construction boom and the price inflation mentioned earlier, in all likelihood accounted for most of the conflict generated in the industry.

Characteristically, as noted, the vast majority of strikes in construction were small and localized in scope, directly involving only one trade. Outstanding during the pre-war period, however, were the few large and protracted "general" strikes in construction. They accounted for a disproportionate share of all workers involved and time lost. Virtually every major metropolitan centre in Canada experienced at least one of these prior to World War I when other building trades declared "sympathy strikes" in support of a particular group involved in a dispute with a contractors' association over an issue deemed of vital interest to all. Thus, Toronto experienced a general shutdown of construction work from May 1 to August 3, 1903, over an attempted wage cut for painters; 9/ Montreal, from April 1 to late June, 1904, over wages, hours, and union recognition; 10/ Winnipeg, from July 3 to September 27, 1906, when a strike by 180 plumbers for higher wages, shorter hours and union recognition was subsequently joined by 4000 workers from other trades; 11/ and Vancouver during June 5 to July 25, 1911 when a strike of 116 carpenters for higher wages was extended to all branches of the building trades, involving some 5,500 workers. 12/

Another notable feature of disputes and strikes in building construction, to judge from reports available, was the apparent absence of violence and the use of police or military forces that characterized labour disputes in a number of other industries.

Railways and Other Transportation Facilities

Railways and certain other fields of transportation likewise had a high incidence of strikes across the country, relative to the size of the work force, and also accounted for a disproportionate share of disputes involving violence, property damage and military action.

A number of the largest and some of the most violent disputes in railways during the pre-War I period should perhaps be put in the category of construction, as they involved workers engaged in the building and maintenance of railway road-beds, tracks, bridges, tunnels and other facilities. As in unskilled and semi-skilled building construction, this was a field of employment that engaged tens of thousands of men during the railway building boom through the two decades preceding the outbreak of war. It was in many cases the first contact of immigrants with the labour market in Canada, as well as a source of outside wage employment for farmers and other seasonal workers. Much of the work was carried on in remote districts hundreds of miles from any established settlements, where the workmen were wholly dependent upon contractors for providing food, shelter, health and comfort. This combination of circumstances led, at times, to widespread exploitation and intolerable living and working conditions, all of which were conducive to bitter unrest and conflict.

Just how bad conditions could be were brought out in the investigation, by a special Royal Commission, of CPR railway construction in British Columbia during the late 1890's. Starting in 1897, under subsidy by the federal government, the CPR extended the Crowsnest Pass railway line from Fort McLeod, Alberta westward for some 300 miles through the Rockies. The prevailing scale of wages was \$1.50 per day, with board supplied at the rate of \$4 a week. The findings of the Royal Commission, as summarized in the Labour Gazette were as follows:

...Though machinery had been provided by the company for the accommodation and medical attention of the men, the measures adopted were not on an efficient scale. Instances were proved of violations of agreements, threatenings, and illegal arrests by contractors, lack of medical attention, non-providing of accommodation, unsanitary houses, tents without stoves, overcharges for supplies, bad methods of wages payments, and other abuses. 13/

As a result of this Report, Parliament in 1900 passed the Public Works Health Act, providing for public regulation of housing and health facilities for workers engaged in railways and public works. As the regulations were found to be inoperative, a special Order in Council was passed in May 1902, to provide an inspector to enforce the regulations. 14/

From various accounts at the time, it appears that the legislation was not always effective in eliminating abuses in railway construction and other public projects. It may, however, have had the effect, indirectly, of stimulating railway construction workers to organize, and at time strike for, improvements in wages and in living and working conditions.

Among the earliest and most notable large-scale disputes in railways was the cross-Canada strike of CPR track maintenance workers, which at its peak involved some 5,000 men from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from June 17 to August 31, 1901. The main issue in this dispute was the refusal of the Canadian Pacific Railway to recognize the trackmens' union or to enter into any kind of collective agreement with it. 15/ The dispute was finally settled through the appointment of a board of conciliation. The transportation crisis generated by this dispute prompted Parliament to undertake its first experiment in compulsory investigation and conciliation of industrial disputes, namely, the Railway Labour Disputes Act of 1903.

The three other major strikes of railway construction labour all occurred in British Columbia, in the course of building two new transcontinental railway lines to the Pacific Coast. Another major strike against the CPR in that province in 1903 involved other non-running trades. These disputes are discussed at some length below, in analyzing the special labour problems of British Columbia in the pre-war period.

A number of major strikes also involved other types of railway workers, including the running trades, and extended over several provinces. One such dispute developed among some 500 members of the International Association of Machinists, who were supported by the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, against the Grand Trunk Railway. The strike dragged on from April 11, 1905 to the end of the year, and at its peak involved several thousand railway workers throughout the whole Grand Trunk system, from Montreal to Sarnia, and also included Port Huron, Michigan. The company was finally able to win the strike by hiring strike-breakers, and applied for an injunction to restrain the striking machinists from interfering with or molesting men hired to replace them. 16/

A much larger, more bitter and violent dispute engulfed the entire Grand Trunk system again some five years later, and extended to the related Central Vermont and Wabash railroads in the United States. The main unions involved were the Order of Railroad Conductors and the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen. The strike developed after they rejected the recommendations of a board appointed under the terms of the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act (IDIA) of 1907. It involved, at its peak, some 2,750 workers directly and 4,800 indirectly, from July 18 to August 2, 1910. The company immediately attempted to hire strike-breakers and employed a considerable number of special police to protect strike-breakers and company property. This led to a number of serious disturbances. In a riot at Brockville, Ontario, on July 22, company property was damaged and seven company employees were injured. Local militia were called out and later replaced by a detachment of the Royal Canadian Regiment from Toronto. Fines and imprisonment were subsequently imposed on several strikers involved. Other less serious disturbances were reported in Belleville, Montreal, Sherbrooke,

North Bay and some other points. Additional detachments of regular troops were sent out from Toronto and London to maintain order. Both unions disclaimed responsibility for the violence.

The unions on their part complained to the Ministers of Labour and of the Interior, in Ottawa, that the Grand Trunk company was importing strike-breakers in contravention of certain provisions of the Immigration Act.

The only strike of comparable size affecting the CPR during this period, without the overtones of violence and military intervention, was a two-month walkout during 1908 involving some 8,000 machinists and carmen, and extending to every province except Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. It developed when the company gave the unions notice of ending the existing agreements, and of its intention to reduce wages, "remove the rights of committees of employees to meet company officers on behalf of the men", and "remove restrictions on, and rules governing, the advancement of apprentices." 17/ A Board was appointed under the IDIA, and after lengthy sittings submitted a majority report almost entirely supporting the company's position. This the unions rejected and went on strike. The company was able to win the struggle through recruiting sufficient strike-breakers to maintain operations. 18/

The strike in railways that incurred the greatest violence and bloodshed prior to World War I was one involving 700 freight handlers employed in the CPR sheds in Fort William, Ontario, in 1909. 19/ The strike arose over the workers' demands for wage increases above the prevailing rates of 17½ cents an hour for day work and 20 cents for night work, as well as for discontinuation of the bonus system whereby the company withheld an additional one cent an hour until completion of the season's work. The strike,

when it broke out on August 9th, without prior notification to the company or to the federal government, constituted an illegal violation of the IDIA. Strikers' representatives claimed that they and the men were completely unaware of the existence of the Act. (An official report by the federal Deputy Minister of Labour, who intervened in the strike, described the workers as being "of numerous nationalities, Greeks, Italians and Ruthenians, with a sprinkling of English-speaking men.") 20/ Subsequently they were prevailed upon to request establishment of a Board of Inquiry, which finally succeeded in settling the dispute.

According to the Board's Report, picketing of the CPR sheds was commenced by the workers as soon as the strike began on August 9th, and continued throughout its duration. Rumours that the strikers were armed led to a thorough search by police, resulting in the arrest of one man for carrying a pistol. 21/ The Mayor of Fort William intervened in the dispute to offer his services as a conciliator. According to the Report, he was well on his way to settling it on August 14th when "an unfortunate incident occurred." Thirty special armed constables were brought from Winnipeg by the CPR and ensconced in the Company's boarding house near the freight sheds. "The arrival of the special constables", the Report comments, in a masterpiece of understatement, "appears to have had an irritating effect upon the strikers." 22/ It continues on a note of carefully guarded criticism:

The Company seems to have followed the customary procedure in this matter, and it has not been seriously suggested that the powers conferred upon them under such conditions by the Provincial Government were in any way exceeded. It would seem possible, however, that a less prominent display of force would have been dictated by prudence, and might have helped avert the calamity that followed, and it is at least arguable whether the public interests do not demand such an amendment of the law as would require that the consent of the public officers responsible for the peace of the community should be procured before so large a body of armed men is brought within the limits of the municipality concerned.

The "calamity" that occurred is described as follows:

While the CPR special constables were breakfasting, the strikers gathered around in considerable force and on the emergence of the constables an altercation ensued, which quickly developed into the active use of firearms, with the result that many persons were severely injured. Eleven constables were wounded and taken to hospital and several of the strikers are also believed to have been wounded and taken away by their comrades; no wounded strikers were taken to hospital. 23/

The Mayor immediately proceeded to the scene of the outbreak, where he read the Riot Act and issued a call for militia. A detachment 150 strong of the 96th Regiment in Port Arthur were soon on duty. Colonel Steele, D.O.C., who was in Port Arthur at the time of the affray, assumed command and also brought 75 members of the Canadian Mounted Rifles in from Winnipeg.

The presence of these armed forces had a "quieting effect," and there were no further untoward incidents. The CPR brought in 100 strike-breakers from the East and work was partially resumed while picketing continued. 24/

The Board of Inquiry under the IDIA intervened shortly after this incident. It was successful in achieving a settlement on August 24th, six days after it commenced sitting and two weeks after the strike had begun. The terms of settlement included a three cent per hour wage increase and abolition of the bonus system. 25/

The other major strikes in the field of transportation prior to World War I occurred in longshoring and in street railways. There was a sympathetic strike of longshoremen in British Columbia in support of the strike of CPR employees in 1903. An earlier strike at the other end of the country, in Halifax, involved some 700 longshoremen supported by 200 coal workers and 300 fish handlers, from April 1 to April 11, 1902. It was a

relatively peaceful affair that was ended by federal mediation. Among the terms of settlement was agreement by the employers not to prosecute either the longshoremen or the sympathy strikers for "breach of contract". 26/

Far overshadowing these was a violent and bitter strike in Montreal, during March 31 to May 16, 1903, of some 2,200 longshoremen supported by 1,500 teamsters and 150 coal carters. At its peak this conflict developed into the proportions of a minor civil war, complete with the use of regular troops dispatched from Quebec and Toronto to relieve the local Montreal militia.

The main issue was the demand on the part of the longshoremen's union to bargain directly with the main steamship lines rather than, as was the custom, with local stevedoring companies. The steamship lines insisted on dealing only with the stevedoring companies, but the latter refused to recognize the union, on the grounds that it was an "international organization". They were supported by the Montreal Board of Trade, which passed a resolution on April 30 condemning the strike as the work of "alien union agitators."

When the strike broke out, the main steamship companies brought over from England a reported 1,000 men, under contract for the season, to unload their vessels. Attempts by the Mayor of Montreal to mediate the dispute were fruitless in view of the stevedoring companies' refusal to recognize the union. A few ships were unloaded under police protection, accompanied by numerous incidents of alleged intimidation, violence, and property damage.

The steamship companies for their part claimed that local authorities were not affording them adequate police protection, and announced that they would hold the city responsible for property damage and failure to protect the men at work on their vessels. Accordingly the Mayor, on April 28, called out local militia to preserve order on the wharves. On May 6 regular troops from St. Johns, Quebec, were sent to Montreal, and troops in Toronto were held in readiness to relieve the militia.

In view of this troubled situation the CPR announced its intention of unloading all its cargoes at Three Rivers, Quebec, for the duration of the strike. The strike was then extended to inter-provincial, and indeed international, proportions. Longshoremen at Quebec, Halifax, St. John, N.B., Baltimore, Maryland, Portland, Maine, and New York City announced a common policy of refusing to handle freight loaded by non-union men in Montreal, or any goods diverted to these points by the strike in that city.

The federal government was finally forced to intervene and settle the strike by mediation, after some discussion and pressure in the House of Commons. The union apparently won the strike by achieving its basic objective of union recognition as well as a 10% wage increase. 27/

On a much smaller scale, three strikes of street railwaymen in different cities in the pre-War I period likewise led to "civil disturbances" and the intervention of military forces. The first of these, in June 1902, involved 1,000 street railway employees in Toronto, in a strike for union recognition, wage increases and some minor demands. According to the account in the Labour Gazette:

After three days of industrial war, during which time the company's lines in the city were practically suspended and the disturbances

assumed such proportions as to warrant, in the opinion of the civic authorities, the calling out of several companies of militia, the strike was concluded through the mediation of a voluntary committee of prominent businessmen. 28/

The union won a 3 cent wage increase (from 15 cents an hour to 18 cents) and recognition from the company.

A later strike of street railway employees involved 180 men in Hamilton, Ontario, during November 1906. It arose out of a dispute over the terms of a previous arbitration board award. Here again, to quote the Labour Gazette's account:

All attempts to settle the disputes proved fruitless, and a few days after commencement of the strike, such serious disturbances took place as to warrant reading of the Riot Act and the dispatch of regular troops from Toronto. 29/

The dispute was finally ended through the intervention of the President of the International Union and the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board.

During March and April, again in 1906, a strike of 240 street railway employees occurred in Winnipeg in a demand for wage increases, union recognition, shorter hours and improved safety standards. The strike developed after negotiations had been carried on between a committee of employees and the company, when the latter fired two members of the negotiating committee. During the first day of the strike the company tried unsuccessfully to operate with strike-breakers in the face of harassment from strikers. The following day, after what were described as "serious disturbances", the Mayor of Winnipeg read the Riot Act and military troops were called out to preserve order. A few cars were run for several days under military and police protection. A compromise settlement was finally achieved on April 7, 1906, through the services of the Winnipeg Ministerial

Association. The union won a 10-hour day, slight wage concessions and other minor benefits, but failed to achieve recognition by the employer. 30/

Manufacturing

The numerous industries classed under the broad Dominion Census definition of "manufacturing" provide, of course, a far larger volume of employment than any other industrial classification. In the pre-War I period they accounted for more than one-half of all non-agricultural paid employment. However, according to estimates published in the Labour Gazette, only some 20 percent of all strikes and of man-days of employment lost in strikes in Canada during 1901 to 1913 inclusive occurred in this field.

1. Ontario

Ontario, as the province largest in population and in numbers of paid workers, and the one most industrialized, as would be expected, experienced the largest number of strikes. Most of these, however, predominantly in manufacturing and in construction, were small in scale, involving usually a few dozen or at most a few hundred workers for relatively short periods of time. The few strikes of any significant size, intensity or violence in Ontario during the pre-war period were, as described above, in railway and street-car transportation.

The main explanation for the relative placidity of labour relations in Ontario during this period, in sharp contrast to recent years, perhaps lay in its industrial or economic structure and in the nature and composition of its labour force. Southern Ontario was, and is, the major center of manufacturing and "heavy" industry in Canada. It was also a region containing a large rural population that sent a constant stream of new recruits

to the urban industrial work force, and of new settlers to the Western provinces. At the same time, Ontario received a major share of the mass of new immigrants to Canada in the pre-War I period, most of whom entered wage employment in the province.

The great diversity, high turnover and mobility of wage labour in the province presented major organizational difficulties to the trade union movement. Trade unions in Ontario prior to World War I comprised, for the most part, conservative "craft" organizations that were limited to a minority of the better paid and more secure skilled workers in the labour force.

2. Quebec

By far the largest, most prolonged, and at times violent strikes in the manufacturing sector during the pre-War I period occurred in Quebec. These, furthermore, were concentrated mainly in the labour-intensive "light" industries in which that province specialized at the time, notably textiles, clothing, and boots-and-shoes. Indeed, the magnitude, bitterness and violence of some of these disputes, considered together with the major transportation strikes described above in which Quebec was involved, indicate that the province was a major center of industrial unrest and conflict in the pre-War I period. It was second only to British Columbia (or, if coal mining alone were taken as an index, Nova Scotia). This fact would seem to go counter to the rather widely held view that pictures labour in Quebec prior to World War II as being "clerically dominated" and docile.

Lacking sufficient knowledge and facts about the situation, and pending further research, one can only speculate about causes and draw upon what few references are readily available. As numerous studies have pointed

out, Quebec lagged considerably behind Ontario in industrial development prior to World War I, particularly in the more technically advanced "heavy industry" categories. At the same time it had a considerably higher rate of natural increase in population than other provinces, and consequently large annual increments in labour supply from the rural countryside. It was characterized by generally lower rates of pay, longer hours of work and poorer working conditions than applied in Ontario and the western provinces.

The most widely-offered explanation for this state of affairs was the policy of the Catholic Church. In its preoccupation with maintaining French Canada intact, as a distinct French-speaking and Catholic entity in a society dominated by the English-speaking and Protestant majority, it is alleged, the Church fostered a policy of cultural separatism, maintained control over an educational system in which religious and traditional values were stressed at the expense of scientific knowledge and practical skills, and perpetuated attitudes and traditions hostile to those required to adjust to and compete effectively in a rapidly developing urban industrial economy.

While recognizing the validity of this general hypothesis, some scholars have laid greater stress on Quebec's special disadvantages as regards location and resources, in terms of the main technologies and markets at that time, in explaining Quebec's relative economic backwardness. 31/

At any rate, whatever the causes, Quebec prior to World War I was a predominantly agricultural, low-income region suffering relative over-population and limited industrial development. The plentiful labour supply, generally low wages and inferior working conditions gave it a comparative advantage in low-wage, intensive labour-using industries such as textiles, clothing, boots-and-shoes, and fruit-and-vegetable canning and processing.

The resident French-speaking and Catholic population accounted for the overwhelming proportion of farmers and farm labourers, unskilled and semi-skilled workers for factory, construction, clerical, sales, service and menial jobs, as well as small shopkeepers and proprietors, and professional men in the traditional fields of law, medicine and the priesthood. The English-speaking and Protestant minority, better-endowed with capital, technology and "outside contacts", dominated positions of ownership and management in the larger-scale industrial, financial and commercial establishments, as well as in the more lucrative fields of specialization in established professions. In a number of industries they dominated the skilled and supervisory jobs as well.

In the textile industry, by far the most important in manufacturing prior to World War I in terms of capital investment, dollar value of output and volume of employment, English-speaking elements were predominant in capital ownership and in executive and skilled positions. In the clothing industry centering in Montreal, an industry in which small-scale operations, limited capital per unit, and intense competition prevailed, Jews and French Canadians were predominant in the ranks of employers as well as workers. In the boot-and-shoe industry, centred in the City of Quebec, while the largest concerns appear to have been English-speaking in ownership and control, the majority was French-speaking.

Much of the special problem that Quebec has posed in recent years in the Canadian confederation, in terms of ethnic, language and religious conflicts in the political, economic and social spheres, has been explained in terms of the peculiar division of labour in that province, with its sharp and glaring inequalities in wealth, status and authority, in the industrial

or economic context, based on religious or cultural differences. 32/ The strains and conflicts generated by this situation have been particularly apparent in recent decades, after the wave of industrialization of the 1920's, the severe depression of the 1930's, the renewed wave of rapid industrialization during World War II and the postwar boom. It seems more than likely, however, that similar stresses and strains developed in the earlier pre-World War I period of industrialization, stimulated as it was by the general environment of unprecedented economic growth in Canada, and featuring specialization in labour-intensive "light" industries in Quebec because of its plentiful supplies of low-paid labour.

Exploitation of labour was inherent in the situation, and provincial labour laws were inadequate, at best, to provide adequate protection. The Report of a special Royal Commission appointed in 1908 to investigate industrial disputes in the cotton textile industry of Quebec referred to such abuses as excessively long hours of labour for women and young persons, evasion of laws purporting to regulate the employment of children, and wage-cuts in an already low-wage industry imposed on employees without prior notification or consultation. 33/

Conflict was likewise inherent in the situation, particularly in such industries as cotton textiles, in which labour-employer tensions coincided with differences in language and religion. The readiness with which, in several strikes, public officials responded to employer demands for military protection did not improve the climate of industrial relations. Whether the troops were English-speaking or French-speaking was not disclosed in the accounts available.

One of the first such episodes occurred at the plant of the Montreal Cotton Company in Valleyfield during October 1900. Two hundred labourers engaged in excavation work for the company, on land adjoining the plant, went on strike for a 25 cent per diem wage increase above the prevailing \$1.00 a day. The strikers prevented the work being resumed by strike-breakers and interfered with deliveries of coal to the plant.

On the grounds that the property was in danger and that police protection was inadequate, the company requested the Mayor of Valleyfield to have militia brought from Montreal. When the militia arrived, many of the 3,000 textile operatives left their jobs in sympathetic strike action, and "some joined in the attack which was made on the soldiers", according to the Labour Gazette's account. The following day the militia was reinforced by two companies of Hussars (cavalry) and other companies of infantry. Most of the textile operatives stayed away from their jobs for the next couple of days and there were no further serious disturbances. The dispute was finally settled through federal mediation. 34/

The same company experienced another strike that shut down the plant for ten days the following year. In October 1901, 40 spinners went on strike to protest the dismissal of one of their number. Eventually they were joined by all the other 2,500 operatives. The dispute was ended after mediation by the newly constituted Department of Labour in Ottawa. 35/

A major growth in union organization among textile workers in Quebec developed early in 1906. The United Federation of Textile Workers of America, an affiliate of the AFL, organized 14 locals in Montreal, Hochelaga, Magog, Montmorency and other centres. Subsequently, in September 1906, these withdrew from the international union and formed the Federation of Textile Workers of Canada. 36/

The new organization soon became involved in major conflicts. In 1907 it led a strike of some 2,000 textile workers in Valleyfield that lasted 10 days. This was allegedly caused by a company attempting to introduce a "yellow dog" contract which the workers refused to sign. A number of other strikes and lockouts developed that year, mostly over wages. The overall result was an average wage increase of about 10 per cent in the industry. 37/

Strikes developed the following year on a scale that threatened to shut down the industry throughout the province. They began with a walkout of some 200 mule-skinners employed by the Dominion Textile Company and Montreal Cotton Company at plants in Valleyfield, Hochelaga and St. Henri, in protest against a 10 per cent wage cut which the companies claimed was necessary due to the depressed condition of the cotton industry at the time. The mule-skinners are soon joined by other operatives, and in other plants and communities. All told, more than 6000 workers were involved for over a month. They were finally prevailed upon to return to work on the promise of an investigation by a special Royal Commission. 38/

The Royal Commission's Report, as noted, provided evidence of exploitation and evasion of labour laws by employers, and observed that "the lot of many of the operatives in the cotton mills during the present year has been a particularly hard one, both because of a considerable shortage of work and a considerable reduction in the rate of wages paid." The Commissioners, however, with W.L. Mackenzie King, Deputy Minister of Labour, as Secretary, justified the wage cut imposed by employers on the grounds that the industry was generally depressed in Britain and the United States as well as in Canada. They did note that "the manner in which notice of the

intended reduction in wages was given, was an aggravating circumstance." Their Report, however, placed the main blame on unions, or union leaders, for "the unnecessary loss in consequence of the exceptionally large number of strikes which have taken place in recent years." It added: "Some of the strikes which have taken place would not have occurred but for the organizations that existed among the workers, and the methods adopted by some of the leaders..."

The Report's conclusion generally upheld the position of the employers and criticized the unions:

On the one hand, the attitude of the employers has not on the whole been adverse to organization among the employees, though individuals have endeavored to prevent it. On the other, to entitle themselves to that confidence on the part of employers which will ensure a willingness to cooperate with them, the unions must secure harmony within their own ranks, and adopt a more conservative policy toward those with whom they have business dealings. 39/

The only other field of manufacturing in Quebec to face industrial conflict on a comparable scale in the pre-War I period, as noted, was the boot-and-shoe industry in Quebec City. A particularly important development was the industry-wide lockout that applied from October 27 to December 10, 1900. Out of it developed the long-term campaign launched by the Catholic Church in Quebec to organize separate French-speaking syndicats catholiques, in opposition to the "alien" and "secular" unions, under English-speaking leadership, of the Knights of Labor, the Canadian Federation of Labour, and the Trades and Labour Congress.

The dispute began with a refusal by the employers to recognize the union of their employees, or even, indeed, to recognize the right of their workers to bargain collectively, let alone accept the closed shop agreement which the union demanded. When the management of one firm fired an

employee, allegedly for union activity, it provoked a strike by the entire staff of 80 workers. This firm was then joined by 22 out of the 26 other boot-and-shoe factories in Quebec City in a general lockout. The struggle produced a prolonged deadlock until both sides agreed to submit the dispute to Archbishop Bégin for final binding arbitration.

The Archbishop, basing his findings on Pope Leo XIII's Encyclical, Rerum Novarum (1891) proclaimed the "natural right" of labour to organize and bargain collectively with employers. The exercise of such rights, he stated, must be contingent upon "good" objectives on the part of workers' organizations, and their recognition of the "natural harmony of interests" between the classes, as opposed to the doctrines of "class conflict" endorsed by Marxists and other radical or revolutionary groups. The Archbishops' report recommended a "substantial realignment" of union aims and objectives to be consistent with basic Catholic principles. More specifically, it called for a final tri-partite board of arbitration to settle all disputes in the industry. 40/

Despite these arrangements, the industry suffered a second prolonged shutdown three years later, from October 30 to December 17, 1903. It was initiated by a walkout of five machinists in protest against the substitution by management of piece-rates in place of the traditional daily rates of pay. They refused to return to work despite the urgings of the company management and of the Fraternity of Shoe Machine Workers. In consequence, the employers again imposed an industry-wide lockout, as in 1900, to force settlement of the issue. They were supported in this action by the Board of Arbitration, which found the strike illegal under the terms of the prevailing contract. 41/

The only other dispute of such magnitude in the industry prior to World War I began on December 19, 1913 and lasted until February 14, 1914. It developed when 250 men struck in protest against the employment of non-unionists and soon involved some 4,000 workers throughout the industry in Quebec City. It was finally settled through mediation by the federal Department of Labour. 42/

The important clothing industry of Montreal experienced only one major shutdown comparable to those discussed above. This was a six-week strike of 4,500 workers during June and July, 1912, in demanding a reduction of working hours from the prevailing 55 to 49 hours, with compensating increases in hourly rates to maintain weekly take-home pay. The strike ended with no significant disturbances, in a compromise. 43/

One other strike in the province of Quebec in the pre-war period, a relatively small and localized dispute, was notable for the violence that it engendered. This was a walkout of some 400 sawmill employees in Buckingham, Quebec, during September and October, 1906, for a wage increase above the prevailing rate of $12\frac{1}{2}$ cents an hour. The account given in the Labour Gazette merits quoting at length.

On September 28, at the request of the workers, the federal Department of Labour offered to mediate, but was refused by the company on the grounds that the latter would not deal with the International Labour Union, of which the men were members.

Likewise, the Quebec government was unsuccessful in effecting a reconciliation.

On October 8th, the company attempted to bring down some logs with the help of men working under the protection of special police and detectives. A large number of strikers had gathered, and in an effort to prevent the work from proceeding, a serious riot occurred, in which two strikers were shot and killed and several others seriously injured. One detective was also fatally injured, and three others seriously injured.

The Mayor of Buckingham immediately petitioned for military protection, and 100 militia men were sent from Ottawa the same night. They were later replaced by regular troops from St. Johns, Quebec, who remained there for some time.

The coroner's jury returned an open verdict in the deaths, and recommended that individuals on both sides be criminally prosecuted.

No agreement was ever reached, but on October 24th the mill resumed normal operations, the strikers either having capitulated or found work elsewhere. 44/

COAL MINING: EAST AND WEST

Far overshadowing the developments discussed so far, in different industries and provinces, were the frequency, intensity, magnitude and duration of industrial conflict in coal mining in the years preceding World War I and in subsequent years up to and including World War II. Two strikes alone in this industry, one that lasted for 22 months in Nova Scotia during 1909-11 and another in the Eastern British Columbia-Western Alberta region for eight months during 1911, accounted for more than one-quarter of all man-days of employment lost in the hundreds of strikes over Canada as a whole from 1901 to 1912, inclusive. Another equally large strike on Vancouver Island, starting in 1912, lasted for over two years.

All told, this one industry, employing in the aggregate a mere 25,000 workers, or less than 2 percent of all non-agricultural labour in Canada, accounted for about 5 per cent of all strikes, 24 per cent of all workers involved, and 42 per cent of all time lost in strikes during 1900 to 1913 inclusive. 45/

Coal mining was a centre of conflict in other respects as well. As one measure, throughout its history in Canada it was characterized by intense inter-union rivalry and conflict. At one time or another, coal miners

have been organized by such varied groups as the Knights of Labour, the Miners and Mine Labourers' Protective Association, the Western Federation of Miners, the United Mine Workers of America, the Provincial Workmen's Association, the Industrial Workers of the World, the Amalgamated Mine Workers of Nova Scotia, the One Big Union, the Mine Workers' Union of Canada, the Canadian Federation of Labour, and sundry company unions.

The use of military forces in strikes has also been a feature in coal mining. This occurred in Vancouver Island, British Columbia, at various times from 1881 to 1912, and in Nova Scotia in 1909, 1923 and 1924. The record shows numerous instances of riots, violence and property damage in labour disputes in the industry, and arrests by police or military forces numbered in the hundreds.

As dictated by the location of its resources, coal mining on a commercially profitable large scale was confined, in Canada, to three main areas or regions, namely: Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, particularly in the Glace Bay Area of Cape Breton Island; the Nanaimo-Wellington area of Vancouver Island, on British Columbia's west coast; and a sizeable area of southwestern Alberta and southeastern British Columbia.

Various special features of coal mining, as an industry and occupation, have tended to set it apart from other industrial sectors and generate certain behaviour-patterns more or less common to all areas in which the industry is carried on, regardless of varying economic and social structures and cultural characteristics of different regional environments. These latter, however, have been affected by the fact of coal mining and its behavioural characteristics in their midst. These in turn have reacted upon and affected the patterns of behaviour in coal mining in various ways.

These points would seem to merit special examination at some length, in view of the central role that coal mining played in the history of industrial unrest and conflict in Canada during the first half of this century.

General

In their comparative survey of eleven countries, covering a period of several decades, Clark Kerr and Abraham Siegel found that in almost every case coal mining was by far the most "strike-prone" of all industries, as measured by frequency and duration of strikes and time-loss relative to employment. 46/ It was followed, in order, by metal mining, maritime (shipping and longshoring), lumber and textiles.

The main factor which these industries had in common to explain their vulnerability to strikes, the authors found, was that of geographic and/or social isolation of their workers from other occupational groups. Characteristically they work, or worked, in one-industry towns, often living in company-owned houses and depending on company-owned stores and other facilities. Such problems generated many frustrations and grievances, and more important, what Kerr and Siegel call "the totality of verbally shared grievances" tended to develop into a consensus of sentiment that was hostile to the employers, particularly where these were absentee owners. To quote:

...The strike for the isolated mass is a kind of colonial revolt against far removed authority, an outlet for accumulated tensions, and a substitute for occupational and social mobility. 47/

Kerr and Siegel's survey did not include Canada, and the picture they present does not entirely apply to this country. The textile industry in Quebec, as described earlier, appears to have fitted the picture, at least

in the first decade of this century, and again from the later 1930's up to the present time. Similarly, longshoring and shipping in certain periods. On the other hand, the lumber industry in Canada was not particularly strike-prone except in British Columbia, and then not until the 1920's and, more particularly, the 1940's and 1950's. And, for various reasons, strikes in metal mining and smelting in Canada have been relatively limited in size and impact until recently.

Coal mining in Canada, however, definitely did fit into the Kerr and Siegel hypothesis, as the strike statistics quoted above demonstrate all too clearly. The causes lie not only in the fact of geographic and social isolation. There is also the fact that coal mining historically has been, to use a popular phrase, a "sinkhole for unskilled labour," drawing on newly arrived immigrants and displaced workers from other industries. Once they are identified with the occupation, coal miners for the most part seem unable to escape. They have shown a peculiar immobility, both geographic and occupational. Thus in periods of unemployment, due to technological change, declining markets, or depletion of resources, coal mining areas tend to become among the worst "pockets of poverty." This has been true of Britain and continental Europe as well as of Canada and the United States.

Long hours, low earnings, dangerous or unsanitary working conditions and labour exploitation generally, have been common in the industry whenever the workers have been unable to organize effectively and strike for their demands. Further provocations to conflict have lain in the frequent bouts and of prolonged unemployment, even in boom periods, in the high risks of accidents and fatalities.

All of these conditions generally applied to the coal mining industry in Canada. A detailed study of collective bargaining in the industry by

E. Bjarnason 48/ found that the incidence of strikes, as measured by time loss, followed a broad trend or cycle. The largest and most prolonged strikes were concentrated in two periods. One was during the period in which coal mining experienced its greatest expansion, namely, from the late 1890's to World War I, when the federal government imposed emergency controls on the industry in order to limit conflict and maintain production. The other was during the early 1920's, the beginning of the long decline that the industry underwent after World War I. There was another brief flare-up of strike activity during the later 1930's and World War II.

The effectiveness of unions, and of strikes, differed considerably among the three major producing regions in Canada. Both in the Nova Scotia and in the Vancouver Island coal fields there was a strong trend toward consolidation, such that by the turn of the century one or two concerns accounted for the major share of output and employment in each area. As "monopsonies" in a limited labour market they succeeded in resisting effective unionization and breaking strikes. They were able to "exploit" their labour in the pre-War I period in the sense that the wages of coal miners in these areas generally lagged behind coal prices and earnings on capital invested in the industry, and lagged relative to wages in other comparable industries and occupations.

The coal mining region of southwestern Alberta and southeastern British Columbia, by contrast, comprised large numbers of small and medium-sized operators. Here the stronger bargaining power of unions enabled them to gain a larger share of the industry's earnings, and wages and working conditions were generally superior to those of coal miners on the west and east coasts. 49/

Maritimes

The Maritimes has long been the lowest income and most economically under-developed region in Canada, having generally the highest rates of unemployment and large amounts of under-employed labour in marginal or sub-marginal farming, fishing, logging and sawmilling operations. The position of trade unions in the region has generally been weak and vulnerable in all but a few skilled or secure trades in some major urban centers, or in certain strategic industries such as pulp and paper. With the exception of coal mining, labour in the Maritimes has generally been exceedingly conservative in political and other orientations, and there has been a relatively low incidence of strikes or other overt expressions of industrial conflict. And, in contrast to conditions in British Columbia as described below, coal mining as a centre of periodically intense and at times violent conflict appears to have had little impact upon the attitudes and actions of workers in other industries of the region. Primary steel would seem, on the face of it, to have been an exception to this generalization, but here the overwhelming dominance of the same employer as in coal mining, in highly integrated operations, was the main factor. 50/

The coal industry in the Maritimes, therefore, during most of its history was able to draw upon an almost perfectly elastic labour supply relative to its needs, and at standards of wages, hours, and working conditions inferior to those of most other provinces. The bargaining power of employers vis-à-vis labour in Nova Scotia was further enhanced during the two decades prior to World War I by the growing concentration of ownership and control over producing operations in the hands of a few major concerns, and finally one.

The industry underwent rapid consolidation during the later 1890's and early 1900's. By 1893 the Dominion Coal Company had taken over most of the mines in Nova Scotia. In 1899 the Dominion Steel Company was formed, and the two firms were merged into the Dominion Steel and Coal Company (or DOSCO) in 1902. Subsequently this concern acquired the only other sizeable firms in the industry, as well as the major steel producing facilities in the region, namely, the Nova Scotia Steel and Coal Company, and Cumberland Coal and Railway.

Labour organizations in Nova Scotia coal mining were generally weak and ineffective vis-à-vis the pre-eminent bargaining power of employers in the industry. Coal miners in the region were first organized in 1879 in the Provincial Workmen's Association (PWA) and that organization remained dominant in the industry until after World War I. Its origin lay in a strike that developed in coal mining in opposition to a wage-cut imposed by a number of operators in the face of rising prices for coal.

The PWA, by early 1900's, perhaps mainly because of its weak bargaining position in a region of widespread under-employment, had become an essentially weak and ineffectual union. Its main policy was one of peaceful accommodation, or indeed collaboration, with major employers. Officially the union opposed strikes as a method of improving wages and working conditions. Financially weak, and maintaining no defence funds, it had conducted only four important strikes prior to 1900. In fact, however, there were numerous unofficial or wild-cat strikes. The Springhill, Nova Scotia local alone conducted no less than twenty-two of them against the Cumberland Railway and Coal Company in the latter's first twenty years of operations.^{51/}

The Association focused its efforts on obtaining passage of provincial legislation enforcing minimum standards in coal mining as regards such matters as adequate safety inspection, banning employment of children, licensing of check-weighmen, and certification of miners for employment. It achieved a considerable measure of success in gaining such objectives, while failing to win wage and hour standards equal to those in other comparable industries, or in coal mining in Alberta and British Columbia. The standard wage for DOSCO coal employees in 1910 for instance was estimated to be \$1.50 per diem, and average annual earnings were \$381.45. 52/

The first important strike in Nova Scotia after the turn of the century was one involving 1,500 workers in the iron and steel branch of DOSCO's operations from June 1 to July 22, 1904. The strike had developed as a result of rivalry between the PWA and the Knights of Labour. The latter organization exploited worker dissatisfaction over a wage-cut that the company had carried out the previous year. 53/

The strike was called by the PWA in demanding restitution of the wage cut. The only violent incident during the walkout occurred when a police officer, in attempting to collect a poll tax from an Italian labourer, was attacked by some 50 workers and severely beaten. The PWA, in disclaiming responsibility for the attack, immediately appointed a committee to assist the police in maintaining order. 54/ It was, however, perhaps symptomatic of the unrest and hostility prevailing in steel and coal. The strike was finally settled through federal government mediation. It was a drastic failure for the union and seriously depleted its strike funds.

The next major struggle broke out in 1909 and continued for two years. It arose essentially out of intense inter-union rivalry.

There had been growing rank-and-file dissatisfaction with the Provincial Workmen's Association for several years and widespread suspicion that the union's leaders had been "selling out" to DOSCO. This situation led, in 1907, to entry of the AFL - United Mine Workers (UMW) into the coal fields of Nova Scotia to contest the PWA's leadership. The UMW, in its organizational efforts in that province, had the advantage of powerful financial and other support from the international headquarters of one of the largest unions in the American Federation of Labor. It won a major following, by popular vote, of members in most PWA locals in Nova Scotia.

The UMW, however, faced one major difficulty, namely, that the PWA enjoyed closed shop and check-off privileges with the leading coal employers, DOSCO and the Cumberland Railway and Coal Company. When miners' local members changed their affiliation and left the PWA to join the UMW, their dues were returned and they were discharged. This situation led to dissatisfaction and, finally, a prolonged and bitter series of strikes.

The main disputes, in Springhill and Glace Bay, were submitted to conciliation boards appointed under the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act of 1907. The boards in both cases found against the employees' claims, and in so doing expressed the anti-American sentiment so prevalent at that time. The Glace Bay board's report, for instance, justified DOSCO's actions on the grounds that:

...the UMWA is a foreign organization...having power to call sympathetic strikes.... The board points out the menace such a power would be in view of the fact that serious inroads are being made into the St. Lawrence market by American operations.^{55/}

The majority of miners, now affiliated with the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), rejected the boards' recommendations. Bitter and

protracted strikes ensued. Twenty-five hundred miners of DOSCO struck at Glace Bay for recognition of the UMW on July 6, 1909, and the strike continued until April 28, 1910. By that time the company had resumed restricted operations and many strikers had left the area to seek work elsewhere. 56/ Meanwhile, 1,700 employees of the Cumberland Railway and Coal Company had struck at Springhill on the same issue. This dispute finally ended on May 27, 1911 under pretty much the same conditions. The company meanwhile had been taken over by DOSCO. 57/ It was the twenty-third strike in twenty years experienced by Cumberland.

During the course of these strikes hundreds of families were evicted from their homes in company-owned houses; dozens of union officials and members were arrested; and 600 soldiers were sent to Glace Bay to break up meetings and demonstrations of the miners. 58/

The UMW was estimated to have spent more than \$1 million in support of the strike, and it suffered a disastrous defeat. It passed into oblivion in Nova Scotia for several years. During the entire period from 1908 to 1918, according to Eugene Forsey, the history of collective bargaining by the Provincial Workmen's Association was simply a matter of renewing existing agreements, with wages remaining unchanged except for slight upward revisions for some of the lower paid employees. 59/

British Columbia and Alberta

British Columbia, in contrast to the Maritimes, was a dynamic, rapidly growing economy from the late 1890's to World War I. It reaped special benefits from the rapid settlement and development of the Prairie provinces during that period. There was rising demand for indigenous products such as

coal and lumber, and for imports from abroad. These provided a major stimulus to the trade, finance and transportation sectors centred in the port of Vancouver. Additional stimuli to the provincial economy were provided by a rising export demand for British Columbia primary products such as fish, coal, lumber and metals and by the large volume of railway construction. The latter included not only the western branches and termini of the proposed two new transcontinental railways, the Grand Trunk Pacific and the Canadian Northern, but also the Crowsnest Pass branch line of the CPR. The latter made possible rapid growth of large-scale lead and zinc smelting operations as well as coal mining in the southeastern section of the province.

Also, in contrast to the Maritimes, British Columbia by the turn of the century, despite its economically under-developed status and its extreme dependence upon a few staple primary industries (or, perhaps, from another point of view, because of this latter) had a relatively well established and militant labour movement with a strongly radical orientation. For the next three decades it was to be the most strike-prone province and a major centre of labour unrest in Canada. While coal mining provided the most intense focus of industrial conflict in the pre-War I period, it was only a part, albeit a major one, of a larger pattern of unrest and conflict that encompassed other major industries in the province.

A number of characteristics serve to explain the comparatively militant and radical character of the labour movement in British Columbia. Historically, for one thing, frontier areas have tended to be the main centres of radical movements on the North American continent, partly through a process of selection, in attracting the more restless and dissatisfied elements, the déracinés, from other regions. British Columbia, furthermore,

specialized to an extreme degree in the types of industries which Kerr and Siegel found in their survey to be most strike-prone, namely, coal and metal mining, maritime, and lumber production. The latter, however, because of the small scale and seasonality of its operations, and the highly migratory and individualistic character of its labour force, remained largely unorganized and free of major strikes in the first two decades of this century. On the other hand, in view of the special labour conditions in this province, most of the construction work in British Columbia would seem to have fitted into the Kerr and Siegel hypothesis.

Not only was there the factor of distance and social isolation of the labour force in these industries, as discussed earlier, but there was also their extreme vulnerability to seasonal and cyclical fluctuations in output and sales, and therefore in employment and earnings, and their extreme dependence on uncertain and unstable external markets. Furthermore, unlike other provinces, the topography, resource endowment, industrial and occupational structure of British Columbia did not provide any broad base of farming as a source of security to which wage workers could return in times of unemployment and adversity.

Two or three other special developments stand out in contributing to the militancy and radicalism of the labour movement in British Columbia. First, there was the prevailing government policy characteristic of the time, and still applying to some extent, of making large grants of land, timber, mineral and other resources, as well as generous subsidies for particular objectives, to major business interests in order to stimulate rapid economic growth. This was a policy that tended to promote corruption, the amassing of large fortunes and indulgence in conspicuous expenditure by

the more fortunate minority of the nouveaux riches. It generated intense resentment among the less privileged in an era of generally low incomes, widespread poverty and insecurity.

Secondly, there was the comparatively large immigration of Orientals, who by the turn of the century constituted a significantly large fraction of British Columbia's total labour force. Because of racial prejudice and other special disadvantages they faced, Orientals were particularly vulnerable to exploitation by employers and to hostility from other workers. They were resented especially as a source of cheap labour and, in situations of industrial conflict, as strike-breakers. In British Columbia, as in California and other western states, mass immigration and employment of Orientals was one of the most potent issues in stimulating labour unionization and political action. The Oriental issue was to remain a major source of unrest and violent conflict for several decades, as manifested in demonstrations and riots, violence and property damage, as well as in political pressure leading to the passage of discriminatory legislation.

Serious riots against the Chinese first occurred in 1887. The provincial government on that occasion declared Martial Law, the charter of the City of Vancouver was temporarily withdrawn, and special police were dispatched to the city. 60/

The worst riot in this century, causing considerable property damage, occurred in 1907. The April 1908 issue of the Labour Gazette contained the following brief report:

On March 8, Mr. W.L. Mackenzie King, Deputy Minister of Labour, was appointed a Commissioner, under the Enquiries Act, Chap. 104, R.S.C. 106, to inquire into the losses sustained by the Chinese population in the City of Vancouver, in the Province of British Columbia, on

the occasion of the riots in that city in the month of September, 1907. 61/

British Columbia during the 1890's and early 1900's, finally, was the recipient of, among other immigrants, two streams that represented and espoused among the most radical or revolutionary ideologies of that era. One stream comprised immigrant British workers, particularly in coal mining and in the building trades, who were influenced by the industrial unionism and socialist doctrines of Keir Hardie, Tom Mann and other left-wing British labour leaders. The other stream comprised numerous immigrants from the United States who were employed in such fields as mining, logging and construction work. Many of these espoused the doctrines of socialism and revolutionary syndicalism as represented by such prominent United States spokesmen as Eugene Debs and William D. (Big Bill) Haywood.

Dissatisfaction of industrial unionists in the United States with the conservative craft-conscious unionism of the American Federation of Labor had led, in the late 1890's, to the formation of the rival American Labor Union in that country. Its main affiliates were the Western Federation of Miners, the United Brotherhood of Railway Employees, and a number of smaller organizations. Branches of these two organizations became established in British Columbia early in the century. Another dissident left-wing organization that developed in the United States, the Socialist Labor Party, and its industrial affiliate, the Socialist Labor Alliance, also organized branches in British Columbia.

One result of these developments, early in the century, was the action of the Trades and Labour Council of Vancouver and New Westminster, which in 1900 broke away from the Trades and Labour Congress for several years and endorsed the American Labor Union.

There were some political repercussions as well. Significantly, it was only in British Columbia prior to World War I that labour and socialist representatives were elected to the provincial legislature and to Parliament. Though a minority, they were able to exert a considerable degree of political influence and effectively promote legislation favourable to organized labour. Most significant of these, in some respects, was the Trades Union Act of 1901, which gave unions considerable protection from injunctions and damage suits resulting from strikes.

The special character and intensity of industrial conflict in coal mining in British Columbia 62/ has to be viewed in relation to the general social and economic context, including particularly the special orientation of the labour movement as outlined above. Because of the different locations and structures of the main two coalfields — on Vancouver Island, and in south-eastern British Columbia and Alberta — they will be discussed separately.

1. Vancouver Island

Coal mining on Vancouver Island had experienced labour unrest almost from the beginning of its operations under the Hudson's Bay Company in 1849. A strike developed a few years later among a group of miners brought over from Britain. There were a series of strikes thereafter: in the years 1861, 1865 and 1870-71, (the latter dispute lasting for 5 months); in 1874 and 1877 (in this latter dispute, which lasted for 4 months, strike-breakers were imported from San Francisco); and again, in 1880, 1881 and 1883.

The strike of 1883 brought to the fore the issue of Chinese labour. Chinese were used repeatedly to break strikes of coal miners, and as a source of cheap labour working at one-half or less the average daily wage-rates

for whites. 63/ Further resentment and opposition of resident whites to the Chinese was stimulated by the charge that, because of unfamiliarity with English and inability to read signs and regulations, they contributed to the excessively high accident and mortality rates in coal mining. The record of deaths through explosions and cave-ins in the industry was appalling: 11 in 1879, 65 in 1881, 23 in 1884, 148 in 1887, 75 in 1889, 55 in 1901, and 17 again later the same year, and 32 in 1909. All these fatalities, together with several times that number of accidents and injuries, occurred among a labour force numbering about 4,000. 64/

From the outset, the coal mining industry on Vancouver Island was dominated by two major concerns: the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company, which had taken over the Hudson's Bay company properties in 1861; and the much larger Dunsmuir interests, the founder of which had discovered the Wellington mine near Nanaimo, and later had acquired almost two million acres in land and timber grants from the federal government as a subsidy for building a short railroad on Vancouver Island.

The Dunsmuirs were resolutely, and if need be violently, opposed to unions. In the 42 years in which Robert Dunsmuir and his son operated the coal mines in the Nanaimo-Wellington districts, no union ever achieved recognition although, as one observer noted, "Nanaimo, Wellington and strike were inseparable words." 65/ Most of the earlier strikes listed above developed against this concern.

The Vancouver Coal Company, by comparison, under a relatively liberal management experienced no strikes from 1881 until 1903, when the firm was sold to the Western Fuel Co. 66/ Late in the 1890's, under the encouragement of the management, its employees had organized the Miners' and Mine

Labourers' Protective Association (MMLPA), which was granted a union shop. During its contract with the Vancouver Company it was affiliated at various times with the Knights of Labor, the Trades and Labour Congress, and the Western Federation of Miners.

Efforts by the MMLPA to organize the Dunsmuir mines in 1901 failed when faced with discriminatory firing of unionists and evictions of their families from company housing, and finally with an unsuccessful strike.

The Protective Association affiliated with the Western Federation of Miners in 1903 and a new effort was made to organize the Dunsmuir Mines and gain recognition. This organization, strongly established at the time in the western States, had already organized most of the metal mines and coal mines in southeastern and central British Columbia. Its efforts to organize the Dunsmuir mines failed. Again, the company fired various officials and members of the union and threatened a lockout. The union retaliated with a strike, which failed after lasting from March 11 to July 4, 1903. 67 This conflict developed after a protracted strike of railway employees against the CPR had already begun in February 1903, and had won sympathetic strike action from a number of other unions.

The magnitude and seriousness of conflict in British Columbia, and the suspicion among authorities in Ottawa that the coal miners' walkout in Vancouver was also a sympathetic strike as part of a larger socialist conspiracy emanating from the United States, led to the appointment of a special Royal Commission on Industrial Disputes in British Columbia with the Deputy Minister of Labour, W.L. Mackenzie King as Secretary. The procedures, findings and recommendations of this body were to have an important impact on labour relations in British Columbia for many years. It has been a subject

of controversy among historians and others for decades, and merits some detailed examination at this point. 68/

(a) Industrial Disputes and the Royal Commission in British Columbia, 1903

The railway strike in British Columbia began as one of a number of railway workers' disputes that occurred early in the century, as described earlier. The immediate issue was discriminatory discharge by the CPR of union members and refusal of the company to grant recognition to the union, the United Brotherhood of Railway Employees (UBRE). The UBRE was an affiliate of the American Railway Union, a dissident left-wing United States organization that was allied to the Western Federation of Miners. The strike began in Vancouver and lasted for four months, from February 27 to June 27, 1903. It quickly spread to other centres as far east as Winnipeg. Sympathetic strike support came in British Columbia from steamship crews, teamsters and long-shoremen. Fifteen hundred interior coal miners were already on strike for recognition of the Western Federation of Miners (WFM), as well as for higher wages and shorter hours of work. Strikes in the Vancouver Island coal mines of the Dunsmuir interests, as noted above, occurred in March, over the issue of recognition of the WFM.

In the railway strike, numerous instances of alleged intimidation, violence and property damage were reported and several arrests were made.69/ A dramatic highlight in the dispute was the murder of Frank Rogers, an organizer of the UBRE, while picketing the CPR tracks in Vancouver. He was hit by a volley of nine or ten shots fired, according to one source, "by a gang of thugs employed by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company." 70/ Two suspects were arrested for the murder but were later acquitted, and no complicity on the part of the CPR was proven. 71/

The Royal Commission on Industrial Disputes in British Columbia was appointed in April 1903, while strikes of railway workers and coal miners, both on Vancouver Island and in southeastern British Columbia, were still in force. Despite the commission's official title, which suggested a wide-ranging investigation, most of the evidence at the hearings and the findings and recommendations concerned the coal miners' strike on Vancouver Island and its possible connection with the railway strike. The coal miners' strike in eastern British Columbia was not investigated even though, as on Vancouver Island, it was under the leadership of the Western Federation of Miners.

The hearings were conducted for thirty days. There was testimony from and cross-examination of numerous miners, union and non-union, as well as of James Dunsmuir, the main mine owner and some of his officials. The long history of conflict in the Dunsmuir-owned coal mines, and the unsuccessful attempts by the miners to unionize in the face of intransigent opposition from the employers were brought out in the hearings. Dunsmuir's attitude towards unions was made clear in an exchange with one member of the commission. 72/

Qu. Holding these views-an irreconcilable disbelief in organized labour, you refuse, as I understand it, to have any man in your employment who is in any way connected with a union-you have heretofore?

A. No, we have never done that. We have, of course, refused to have an organization or union around the works, but we have never refused to take men on, whether union or not. We don't ask him.

Qu. Have you not, when you became aware of a man belonging to the union, got rid of him?

A. You mean fired the heads of the union?

Qu. Yes.

A. Every time.

Qu. And you have done that in pursuance of a settled policy of antagonism to organization?

A. Yes, around the works.

Miners testifying at the hearings voiced a long list of grievances about issues that had developed over the past year or two, leading up to the decision to unionize in 1903. There were numerous instances described concerning Dunsmuir's restrictions on free speech and civil liberties of his employees, in addition to dismissals for union activity. The names of three men who had been dismissed for opposing Dunsmuir in the election of 1900, when a labour candidate had run against him in the riding of South Nanaimo for election to the provincial legislature were presented to the hearings 73/. Other convincing evidence was presented showing that numerous miners, for fear of losing their jobs, refused to testify at the hearings of the Royal Commission, and earlier in investigations of the Dunsmuir mines by provincial government agencies checking alleged violations of the law. 74/ During 1901 the employer had required workers at the Extension mine works, on pain of dismissal, to leave the village and move their homes to Ladysmith. The losses and hardships involved created wide spread and continuing resentment. 75/ Numerous miners complained about inadequate payment for digging and removing dirt and rock in the course of coal mining operations, and about the refusal of the employer to appoint a check weighman. 76/ Spokesmen of the miners complained that earnings generally were inadequate in the Dunsmuir mines and charged that the employer favoured a few miners with specially high earnings, working on piece-rates under favourable conditions, at the expense of the majority. 77/ The previous year the company had imposed a wage cut of 10%. Early in 1903 the miners felt that there was an opportunity to win back the previous rates

if they could organize effectively, as the company stood to gain considerably from a 67% rebate on coal imports to San Francisco announced by the United States government early in 1903. 78/

In view of the demonstrated ineffectiveness of unaffiliated local unions of coal miners on Vancouver Island, and the numerous defeats they had suffered at the hands of the Dunsmuir company, effective unionization and collective bargaining seemed to require affiliation with a large, well-financed organization. The United Mine Workers, then pre-eminent in the coal fields of the United States, had no organization west of the Rockies. The 50,000-member Western Federation of Miners, however, had been carrying out a successful organizing campaign, with 24 locals established among coal and metal miners in the southern interior of British Columbia during 1901-03. In September 1902, the Nanaimo Miners' Association voted to join the Federation, and in March 1903, the Dunsmuir miners followed. The Executive Committee of the Association had reported that the WFM was "the securest and most convenient body to join." 79/ Local representatives took the initiative in requesting James Baker, provincial organizer of the WFM, to address meetings and organize branches of the union in the Nanaimo Wellington area.

The Nanaimo miners, employed by the Western Fuel Company, went on strike on February 19, 1903 for a 20% wage increase. The strike was settled after five days, on the basis of concessions amounting to a 10% wage increase and recognition of the WFM as the sole bargaining agent representing the miners. 80/ Efforts of the Dunsmuir miners to win similar concessions ended in defeat. Significantly, in view of the Royal Commission's findings, the Nanaimo and Wellington miners of Vancouver Coal Company did not come out in support of the Dunsmuir miners and remained at work while the railway strike was on.

The findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission in its final Report seemed to have little relation to the voluminous information presented by numerous witnesses in the hearings and published in hundreds of pages of the Commission's Minutes of Evidence. The members of the Commission appeared to have had their own predetermined interpretation of motivations and events leading up to the strikes of 1903, contrary evidence notwithstanding.

The Commissioners in their official Report expressed the view that the United Brotherhood of Railway Employees and the Western Federation of Miners were undesirable organizations for Canadian workers to join. The Report described them as "revolutionary socialist" organizations, not "legitimate" trade unions, and their officials as "not trade unionists, but foreign socialistic agitators of the most bigoted and ignorant type." 81/

The Commissioners concluded that both unions, the UBRE and the WFM, had conspired to bring about strikes on Vancouver Island, or more specifically, in the Wellington mines of the Dunsmuir Company, for the Canadian Pacific Railway depended in part on the Wellington mines for steam coal for its trains running out of Vancouver, and a strike that deprived the CPR of this coal would help the UBRE in its strike against the company.

The Commissioners admitted in their Report that Dunsmuir and other large employers bore some responsibility for the fact that working men organized unions in order to protect themselves from arbitrary and unjust treatment that they sometimes received. The Report expressed the somewhat unoriginal view that higher wages, shorter hours and better working conditions would make workingmen more content and less motivated to organize and strike for their demands. But the numerous grievances expressed by union spokesmen and other miners at the hearings were ignored or dismissed as misleading or irrelevant.

In a strangely circuitous process of analysis, even Dunsmuir's intransigent opposition to unions of any kind was made to fit into the conspiracy thesis. The official hearings had disclosed that James Dunsmuir, President and owner of the Wellington Collieries, invariably locked out his miners once they had organized unions, and dismissed the union leaders. The alleged conspiracy of the UBRE and WFM depended upon the predictable reaction of Dunsmuir to the formation of unions in his mines. The miners, the Report alleged, had not organized their union, joined the WFM and gone on strike for legitimate grievances. Rather, they had been tricked or intimidated into joining the WFM and then found themselves locked out. 82/ Committed as they were to the conspiracy theory, the Commissioners did not explain in their Report the contradictory evidence that not a single witness either admitted or revealed that the coal miners' walkouts against the Dunsmuir Company were sympathy strikes. 83/

In the light of these findings, the Commissioners recommended legislative changes to restrict the activities of all United States unions in Canada. And, as they blamed the rising incidence of industrial conflict in British Columbia on labour's new radicalism, they recommended new laws to control unionism and collective bargaining. "Radical socialistic" unions such as the UBRE and WFM, they declared, should be outlawed. While the Report advised employers to avoid being "arbitrary", "tyrannical" or "arrogant" with their employees, it recommended that certain "reprehensible" actions of labour should be declared illegal. 84/ These included sympathetic strikes, boycotts of employers, intimidation of non-union workers, and the union practice of circulating lists of strike-breakers or "scabs", as well as of employers who dismissed unionists and replaced them with non-union workers. The Report condemned picketing but did not recommend that

it be outlawed. It also recommended that unions be required to become incorporated, and expressed the hope that this would be approved by "the majority of the intelligent and reasonable leaders in labour circles." 85/

One set of recommendations in the Report concerning the prevention and settlement of disputes assumed considerable importance a few years later when it became the basis, in large part, of the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act of 1907. New conciliation and arbitration machinery was proposed that would induce or compel labour and capital to settle their differences before long strikes occurred. It was recommended that strikes or lockouts be prohibited until one side or the other had given 30 days' notice to the Registrar of the Supreme Court of the Province, in the hope that public pressure would induce the parties to reach agreement. It was recommended that compulsory arbitration be reserved for special cases such as public utilities, transportation and communication, as well as such industries as coal mining, if and when protracted strikes threatened to damage the public interest.

What circumstances could explain the submission, by a supposedly impartial Royal Commission of Inquiry, of such a highly partisan and conservative report in which the findings and recommendations were in contradiction to most of the evidence presented at the hearings? The answer appears to have lain in the fact, as pointed out earlier, that the federal government, or more specifically the Minister of Labour, Sir William Mulock, had already preconceived notions about the causes of industrial strife in British Columbia and the measures that should be taken to end it. He was already under strong pressure from major business groups to take legislative action against "international" unionism emanating from the United States,

which many employers blamed for the growing militancy of Canadian Labour in general, and of British Columbia labour in particular. As pointed out earlier, in connection with the longshoremen's strike in Montreal in 1903, the Board of Trade of that city had strongly denounced "international unionism" and "foreign agitators", and called for legislative curbs on their activities. The Canadian Manufacturers' Association likewise called for legal restrictions on the activities of United States union organizers and officials in Canada. 86/ Strikes conducted by the Western Federation of Miners in the Crowsnest Pass area in British Columbia during 1902 and 1903 had proven costly to the mine owners of that province and they were calling for federal intervention. On April 4, 1903, Mulock wrote to the prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, to inform him that he was convinced, after holding conversations with the manager of Le Roi mine at Rossland and with other Canadian businessmen, that industrial disputes were, in the main, caused by interference from United States unions. He wrote as follows:

The working people of Canada have to a large extent come under the domination of the AFL, whom they recognize as their friends. Perhaps it would assist to disillusion them if an intelligent Commission, one in which the working people had confidence, were to point out the injuries that have come to them because of the interference of American unions. Such a pronouncement would have an educational effect. 87/

After conversations with Senator Templeman in British Columbia, who agreed with him about the attitude of employers towards United States unions, Sir William concluded his letter with the suggestion that a Royal Commission be set up to hear evidence in the cities of Nanaimo, Victoria, Vancouver and Rossland concerning the causes of strikes in British Columbia. 88/

No official explanation was given as to reasons for choosing the two commissioners who were appointed to investigate the strikes in British

Columbia. Neither of them had had any experience in industrial disputes or other labour matters. Chief Justice Gordon Hunter of the Supreme Court of British Columbia was supposed to provide an appearance of impartiality to the proceedings, though his biography in Who's Who in Canada described him as a Liberal in political affiliation. The other member, Reverend Elliott S. Rowe, was a prominent Methodist minister in Victoria. W.L. Mackenzie King, as Deputy Minister of Labour, and one who had intervened in numerous labour disputes previously on behalf of the federal government, was the logical choice as Secretary of the Commission. As a protégé of Sir William Mulock's, he appears to have accepted the latter's view that the purpose of the Commission was to "educate" Canadian workmen about the limitations and dangers of United States unionism, particularly in the form of such radical organizations as the Western Federation of Miners.

It seems more than likely that King, in view of his special status and experience, exerted a dominating influence on the views of the two commissioners and thus on the findings and recommendations of their Report. On May 5, 1903, the second day of the hearings, Chief Justice Hunter revealed the purpose of the inquiry to the public. He explained that only one of two "issues" would come out of the inquiry; either the miners had the right to join the Western Federation of Miners or they had not. If the Commissioners concluded that the miners did not have the right to join the WFM, then the federal government could introduce legislation to restrain the union's operations in Canada. In the meantime, the Justice advised the miners to sever their affiliations, end their strike, and return to work. If the federal government approved of the Federation, the miners could always re-apply for membership. Understandably, in view of the Dunsmuir company's intransigent opposition to unions, and the practice of firing union leaders

of any strike, the miners rejected Mr. Justice Hunter's recommendations. In effect, Hunter was asking the miners to be bound by the results of the tribunal while the company was not. The miners' attitude may have further influenced the Commissioners' views in condemning the strike as a conspiracy and recommending that the WFM, in effect, be outlawed. 89/

Contrary to the Commissioners' hopes and expectations, their recommendations did not appeal to the "intelligent and reasonable" leaders of Canadian labour. The Trades and Labour Congress, at its convention in September 1903, strongly denounced the Commission's recommendations and conclusions. 90/ The federal government consequently avoided implementing any of the recommendations for several years.

While it would be impossible to prove conclusively, it seems likely that the hearings and procedures of the Royal Commission, and even more its extremely biased findings and recommendations, had a profound impact on the attitudes and policies of large and important sections of organized labour in British Columbia. Considering the dominant role that W.L. Mackenzie King played in the Commission, its strong rejection by organized labour, particularly in British Columbia, probably undermined his effectiveness in mediating subsequent labour disputes in that province, especially in coal mining.

In all likelihood, also, the Commission's findings and recommendations contributed further to, rather than discouraging as was intended, the radical orientation of important labour groups in British Columbia, their suspicion of and hostility to the federal government, and their growing alienation from the conservative Trades and Labour Congress. These trends were to have explosive repercussions in later years, particularly during and immediately after World War I.

(b) United Mine Workers of America The Western Federation, soon after its defeat in the protracted strike of 1903, abandoned its efforts to organize Vancouver Island coal miners. The task was then taken up by the AFL-United Mine Workers of America.

The UMW met serious defeat in its first test of strength. The Western Fuel Company, which had taken over the Vancouver Coal and Land Company properties in 1903, instituted a series of changes which amounted in effect to longer hours and a reduction in real wages. The unrest generated by these changes led the miners to organize a local of the UMW.

Meanwhile, the efforts of labour representatives in the provincial legislature had led to passage of a new act prohibiting employment underground in mines for more than eight hours out of twenty-four. The company then attempted a further wage cut to compensate for the shorter hours and, when this was rejected by the employees, a lockout was imposed affecting some 600 men.

The federal Department of Labour offered to mediate the dispute, but it was initially rejected by the company on the grounds that the only matter open to discussion was the issue of recognition of the United Mine Workers of America, a question on which the company was unwilling to compromise or submit to arbitration. 91/

The dispute was settled after four months through the median efforts of Mackenzie King, when the company was finally persuaded to accept federal intervention. The method by which it was achieved was to have significant repercussions. It amounted, in effect, to official government encouragement of company unionism, or "employee representation", as it came to be known.

King introduced this device by calling a meeting of miners and asking it to choose a committee to take part in negotiations. Then, during negotiations, he suggested that it have the permanent status of a "bargaining committee."92/ The settlement took the form of collective bargaining, of a sort, but without a bona fide union, having outside support, as a party to it. It served to settle the immediate dispute for the time being, but appears to have generated, over a period of several years, dissatisfaction and unrest that was to boil over into a strike of unprecedented intensity, duration and violence.

The agreement with Western Fuels remained in force, with renewals, for seven years, and similar arrangements were made with two new, smaller companies that entered the field of coal mining on Vancouver Island. Meanwhile, the Dunsmuir mines retained their non-union status with little disturbance other than a couple of small, ineffectual strikes. A seven-year reign of labour peace, of a kind, descended upon the industry.

The United Mine Workers of America made a renewed effort to organize the Vancouver Island coal miners in 1911, this time focusing its efforts on Canadian Collieries Ltd. which had meanwhile taken over the Dunsmuir mines. A strike developed on September 17, 1912, when 3,000 miners walked out of two mines in protest against the allegedly discriminatory discharge of several employees. The Company denounced the stoppage as the work of "foreign agitators". It managed to reopen and operate its mines on a near-normal basis by recruiting oriental and other non-union labour.

On May 1, 1913 the Union then extended the strike to all collieries on the Island, affecting an additional 3700 men. At its peak the strike involved almost 7,000 workers and lasted for almost two years, from September 17, 1912 to August 19, 1914.

Successful efforts by the employers to use oriental and imported strike-breakers on a large scale provoked violent conflict, with serious personal injuries, property damage, intervention of military forces, and arrests numbering in the hundreds.

In Cumberland, a little over a month after the dispute began, Martial Law was declared and a contingent of special provincial police were brought in to protect strike-breakers. From then on the situation deteriorated. The climax was reached on August 12, 1914. The events are described by Phillips, quoting newspaper accounts of the time, as follows:

...In Ladysmith a crowd of striking miners got out of hand and began stoning the hotel and some of the houses where the strike-breakers were living, while a few of the 'scabs' were run out of town. In South Wellington some of the union miners visited the company 'bull pen' which housed the strike-breakers, in an attempt to persuade them to join the walkout. The meeting began with some violence and minor damage was done, but apparently the mission was successful for, 'having got the strikebreakers to quit, the men returned home.'

...At Nanaimo, where miners resorted to mass picketing to prevent the resumption of operations at the Western Fuel Company, 23 special police arrived from the mainland to help the company. They were met by a welcoming committee of miners and, after a brief encounter, the 'specials' decided that the Island was not for them and returned to Vancouver.

...The most serious and, as it turned out, critical confrontation occurred at Extension. The first intimation of trouble came with reports of the shooting of six union miners, and soon union reinforcements were arriving from Nanaimo. The crisis came that night when the miners, fearing an all-out attempt to drive them out of Extension, met face-to-face with the strikebreakers near the Italian 'bullpen'. The strikebreakers were quickly forced back into the mine tunnel, where they were trapped when gunfire broke out. In the meantime, with emotions at a peak, a full scale riot developed. The mine buildings were burned down, along with some of the scabs' houses, and their families fled to the woods along with the mine manager. 93/

This series of incidents led to full-scale military intervention.

Attorney General Bowser announced that: "When day breaks there will be

nearly a thousand men in the strike zone wearing the uniform of His Majesty." The following day the first contingent of 300 of "Bowser's Seventy Two"-militiamen from the 72nd regiment-arrived. Two hundred and fifty-six strikers were arrested and many of these were held for several months without trial.

The conduct of the authorities led to widespread protest, and a "Miners' Liberation League" was formed, with the support of virtually all British Columbia labour organizations. 94/ The British Columbia Federation of Labour asserted that the government had "assisted the coal operators to help defeat the miners in various ways, such as non-enforcement of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, the Deception of Workmen Act, and the Order-in-Council regarding immigration into British Columbia, and by sending special police and militia to act as "scab-herders". 95/ The Federation also voted to take a referendum to authorize a general strike in the province. The miners' strike, however, ended before this materialized. 96/

The UMWA, after pouring in \$16,000 a week and about \$1,500,000 altogether into strike relief, was finally forced to declare a cessation of financial support. 97/ The main companies involved agreed to some minor concessions, including the right of their employees to belong to the UMWA, but refused to extend recognition to the union. In fact, according to Phillips, they continued to practice blacklisting and anti-union discrimination in employment and discharges, and the UMWA locals disappeared one by one for several years. 98/

As one aftermath of the costly strike of 1912-14, the Labour Gazette of April 1919 (v. 385) published the following brief report:

The legislature of British Columbia has appropriated the sum of \$56,878 for the payment of claims for damages arising out of the strike riots in 1914 in the coal producing area on Vancouver Island. These claims have been passed upon by a commission named by the former government of British Columbia.

2. Southeastern British Columbia and Alberta

Up to World War II, Alberta ranked as about equal to Nova Scotia in coal resources and output, with production ranging from four to seven million tons annually. Unlike Nova Scotia and the Vancouver Island coal fields, however, Alberta from the beginning developed production in a multiplicity of small mines, 112 being in operation in 1908 and over 300 by 1918. 99/

Also included in this area, for geographic and commercial regions, are the Crowsnest Pass Collieries of southeastern British Columbia. The Crowsnest Pass Coal Company started operations in 1897 with mines strategically located for two important markets; the Canadian Pacific Railway and the metal mining districts of British Columbia.

Coal miners' unions achieved considerably greater success in achieving recognition and tangible wage and other gains from employers in this region, though not without a good deal of strife. The first labour organization in the area appears to have been the Western Federation of Miners which organized locals among Crowsnest Pass company employees at Fernie and Coal Creek, B.C., in 1899, and in Michel and Morrissey, B.C., in 1901. 100/ Refusal of the company to grant recognition to the union, as well as various demands concerning wage increases, shorter hours and improved working conditions led to a strike in 1903 of 1,500 coal miners, which idled an additional 6,000 workers employed in railways and in metal mining and smelting operations depending on the company's coal output. 101/ Efforts at mediation by W.L. Mackenzie King, representing the federal Department of Labour, proved

fruitless. The dispute was finally settled, after seven weeks, by a committee of the British Columbia Mining Association.

Late in 1903, despite this success, District No. 7 of the Western Federation dissolved. It had suffered a series of setbacks on Vancouver Island earlier in the year, as described above, and its Coal Creek and Michel locals had seceded to join the United Mine Workers of America. This latter organization then established District No. 18, with jurisdiction covering Alberta and British Columbia.

The new organization expanded rapidly, conducting several small strikes to win recognition from various coal operators. The Crowsnest Pass Coal Company experienced another large strike from September 22 to November 13, 1906, of 1,600 workers employed at its Fernie and Michel operations, in a refusal of the men to work with non-union employees. 102/

A far more serious strike which was to have important implications for labour relations generally in Canada in subsequent decades developed in Alberta in 1906. This involved some 500 miners employed by the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company in the Lethbridge district, and lasted for almost nine months, from March 9 to December 2, 1906. The demands of the strikers included union recognition, check-off, wage increases, an eight-hour day, and others. In June, after three months on strike, the men expressed a willingness to arbitrate the dispute. The company, however, refused this offer, stating that it would deal with its workers only on an individual basis. It re-commenced operations with non-union miners but at a greatly reduced output. 103/

This resulted in a serious coal famine in large areas of Alberta and Saskatchewan, which depended almost entirely on the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company for its supplies. Premier Walter Scott of Saskatchewan made a special trip to Ottawa to demand emergency measures, and the Alberta Coal Commission carried out a special "Investigation into Labour Conditions in Alberta Coal Mines and into the Fuel Supply of the West." 104/ W.L. Mackenzie King then intervened in yet another strike in western coal mining. He engaged in lengthy negotiations and took a trip to the UMWA headquarters in Indianapolis, in the course of which he obtained a promise of intervention by international executives of the union. These efforts succeeded, in spite of strong opposition of the company to federal mediation efforts, in bringing the disputants together and concluding the walkout. Compromises were extracted from the company, including wage increases and the promise of non-discrimination against union members, but not union recognition or the check-off. 105/

The strike was signally important in stimulating the formulation and passage by Parliament, in 1907, of the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act (IDIA). This statute was to provide the main basis for attempted labour disputes settlement in Canada until well on into World War II. It provided, among other things, for the compulsory intervention of the federal government into industrial disputes upon the application of either party, and the appointment of a tri-partite board to hold hearings and recommend the terms of settlement. Pending its hearings and submission of its report, with no time limit on these, both parties were prohibited from undertaking direct action in the form of strikes or lockouts, picketing or boycotting. While unions were thus temporarily deprived of their main bargaining weapons, as noted earlier, there were no effective restraints placed on employers to

prevent the familiar practices of imposing yellow-dog contracts, black - listing, discriminatory discharge of union members, and employment of non-union members or strike-breakers. On balance, it appears to have operated adversely to the strength and effectiveness of organized labour in Canada. There are other, perhaps more charitable interpretations of the IDIA and the objectives of its chief architect, W.L. Mackenzie King. H.D. Woods 106/, most notably, in examining various public statements and reports by King, concludes that the latter's main purpose was to encourage, by degrees, the establishment of unionism and collective bargaining in Canada. That is to say, legislation such as the IDIA, which required the parties to a dispute to nominate representatives who would meet together in a Board of Inquiry under a neutral chairman, was conceived of as a means of giving unions some official status and forcing employers to grant them at least limited recognition. One could argue, on the other hand, that the Act may well have given employers encouragement to resist granting full recognition to unions, in so far as it prevented the latter from striking or picketing at the most strategic time, while failing to protect them from employer attack. The Act thus may well have delayed the evolution, in Canada, of mature collective bargaining. Particularly did this tend to be the case where King, and subsequently other federal mediators and boards, frequently used the disputes settlement strategy of arranging agreements between employers and committees of their employees, instead of with bona fide unions.

At any rate, to judge by the mounting incidence of unrest and conflict, in the years immediately following its enactment, and recurrently in subsequent decades, it appears to have been largely ineffective even in its immediate short-range objective, that of preventing and settling disputes in industries deemed to be of major importance to the economy, such as coal-mining.

Hardly was the ink dry on the new Act when another strike developed in the coal mines of Alberta and British Columbia which, though larger, was of much shorter duration. This involved at its peak some 3,450 men, from April 15 to May 7, 1907.

The Western Canada Coal Operators' Association had been formed the previous year, including all the major coal producers, for the purpose of negotiating with the union on an area basis paralleling that of UMWA District 18 jurisdiction. The union had applied for federal conciliation under the IDIA's terms. The companies, however, temporarily opposed this on a legal technicality. This action provoked a premature strike in violation of the Act's provisions. Once again Mr. King entered into the picture and succeeded in effecting a settlement which involved, among other things, an immediate wage increase and establishment of a permanent representative board for the settlement of future disputes, as well as fixing of rates for new work. As part of the "deal" the companies agreed not to discriminate against union members, in exchange for the union's undertaking not to discriminate against non-union men. 107/ Mr. King appeared to have achieved short-term peace at the expense of long-term stability. As Bjarnason observes:

It was, for good or ill, the subject of much strife in later years. Non-discrimination has a democratic sound, but in this form it has no place in a union agreement. A union which cannot "discriminate" against strikebreakers and "free riders" is not likely to prove an effective union. 108/

Having conceded limited recognition to the UMWA, the companies belonging to the Western Canada Coal Operators' Association made a last ditch stand against the demand for a "union shop". In this they succeeded in standing fast for well over a decade despite serious pressure and conflict.

When the time came in 1909 for renewal of the above-mentioned agreement negotiated in 1907, neither the "joint board" for disputes settlement nor the "united front" of operators proved to be as effective as their sponsors had hoped. No agreement having been reached by the deadline on April 1, 1909, the district union called a strike, involving more than 2,000 men. A tentative agreement was arrived at, but just before it was ratified the Crowsnest Pass Company signed a separate contract on terms more favourable to the union. Fortified by this success the union refused to sign the district contract with the Association unless it was modified in accordance with the Crowsnest settlement. This the Association refused to do. The union then applied for appointment of a conciliation board under the IDIA and an agreement was finally signed on June 30. 109/ It included check-off privileges "on the individual request of any of the company's employees," but this was accompanied by the "non-discrimination" clause against non-union employees of the old agreement.

Two interesting provisions of the new agreement made their appearance for the first time. One clause stipulated that when Chinese were employed in the mines they should be paid the full scale of union wages. This principle was possible here, in the eastern British Columbia-western Alberta region, as it had not been hitherto in British Columbia, only because a limited number of this minority was employed and the unionized miners were in a stronger bargaining position than on the west coast. The other new clause gave employees the right to purchase goods wherever they chose, an expression of resentment against the problem of company stores in coal mining communities. 110/

Two years later another strike of coal miners occurred throughout the Alberta and eastern British Columbia district. It developed into one of the three largest and most costly disputes, all in coal mining, prior to World War I. It involved more than 7,000 men for almost eight months, from April 1 to November 20, 1911. 111/ Again the main issues were degree of union recognition, wage increases and various conditions of work. And again, as in 1907, the prospect of a serious coal famine and widespread hardship in the Prairies aroused public apprehension and mounting pressure for federal action from Ottawa. Accordingly, on July 31, an emergency Order-in-Council was passed on the recommendation of the Minister of Labour to remove customs duties on coal imported into Canada west of Sault Ste. Marie and consumed in the western provinces. And again the Department of Labour intervened directly in the dispute, under terms of the IDIA. An agreement finally was reached in late November, largely constituting a renewal of provisions in the old one, with some minor concessions in wages and working conditions by the employers. The miners once again accepted defeat on the issue of union security. The voluntary check-off provision was renewed, and the "open shop" guaranteed. Notwithstanding these limitations, the union signed an exceptionally long-term agreement, which was not due to expire until March 31, 1915. 112/

OTHER INDUSTRIES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

The conflicts surrounding organized labour's efforts to unionize the mining industry in British Columbia, as stressed earlier, constituted only one aspect, albeit the major and central one, of a general context of labour militancy and unrest in the years prior to World War I. A number of other areas of important industrial activity were similarly affected.

The Fishing Industry. 113/

Fishermen, ordinarily, are not considered part of the labour movement and are not expected to engage in collective bargaining and strikes. The majority are, nominally, "working proprietors" who own their own boats and gear, rather than propertyless wage-earners. Even those who are hired crew members on larger purse-seine and trawling vessels have been legally defined as "partners in joint enterprises" where their earnings are derived from shares of the catch rather than from wages. As a highly individualistic and competitive occupation, furthermore, one would expect fishing to offer one of the poorest prospects for unionization, as indeed it has over most parts of this continent.

Various conditions more or less peculiar to British Columbia, however, provided special incentives to fishermen to organize, bargain collectively, and occasionally strike for their demands. Not only have there been, and are, the usual hazards of the occupation-the high risk of loss of life and property, uncertain weather conditions, short working seasons, variable catches and highly uncertain earnings, coupled with virtually unlimited competition from those willing to enter the trade-but the special structure and markets of the industry in British Columbia also have rendered fishermen from the outset peculiarly dependent upon a few large fishing and canning companies to supply markets for their output, capital for necessary boats, gear and provisions, and facilities for transporting, storing, refrigerating and processing their produce. Such conditions created a relationship of dependence equal or greater than that of the traditional "propertyless" wage-earners on their employers. The focal point of conflict has tended to be the price paid for fish, like the wages paid to labour in other occupations.

But while prices were the immediate cause of most strikes in the fishing industry in British Columbia, competition among the major racial groups provided the first important stimulus to unionize and the source of the most bitter conflicts. Specifically, from the 1890's to the 1920's the strongest and most persistent force impelling the fishermen of British Columbia to organize into unions appears to have been the growing competition of Japanese with whites and native Indians. Indeed, the intense and deep-rooted antagonism to the Japanese in British Columbia that culminated in the expulsion of this minority from the coastal areas of the province in 1942, first took root among fishermen.

This issue came to the forefront in the most violent disputes in the history of the fishing industry. More than any other single factor during the early period of organization, competition created a common hostility to the Japanese that transcended the various other racial, language and occupational divisions among white and Indian fishermen and drew them together into the same unions. Japanese fishermen, in turn, were driven to organize their own unions in self-defence. But anti-Japanese sentiment, while providing added momentum to the growth of unionism in its earlier stages, continually split the ranks of organized fishermen in British Columbia and seriously weakened their bargaining power in relation to canning and fishing companies. Chiefly on this account the majority of strikes met with rather indifferent success until the 1920's. Japanese competition, while remaining a potent source of friction among fishermen, ceased to be a major issue governing union policy after the 1920's, as the federal government arbitrarily reduced the number from this minority licensed to fish.

Unionism first took root among British Columbia fishermen in the lower mainland district where the Fraser River empties into the Gulf of Georgia. Here the largest, most violent and spectacular disputes in the history of the fishing industry occurred about the turn of the present century. This district was the main centre of the salmon canning industry of the province prior to World War I as the Fraser River was the most important spawning ground for sockeye and coho on the Pacific Coast.

Practically all fishing at that time was carried on close to shore in company-owned gillnetting boats, propelled by oar and sail. Each boat carried two men, one to "set" the net and haul in the catch, the other to row and steer. As the main fishing season on the Fraser lasted less than two months, the majority of fishermen and cannery workers had to depend on other employments during the rest of the year. Most of them lived in the cities of Vancouver and New Westminster and smaller communities in the lower Fraser Valley. They were essentially an urban occupational group, engaged in other industrial pursuits besides fishing, and were strongly influenced by the rapidly growing urban labour movement of that period.

The fishing and canning companies located in the Fraser River were a well-organized group. Together they accounted for more than one-half of the annual salmon output of the province prior to World War I. Early in the 1890's they formed the Fraser River Cannery Association, primarily to promote orderly marketing and to achieve some degree of unified control over the output and price of British Columbia salmon. This body functioned also as a tightly-knit employers' association in dealing with fishermen.

The major motive impelling the Fraser River fishermen to unionize was not so much to achieve wage or price increases as such, as to protect

themselves against growing competition from outside sources. Large numbers of United States fishermen were coming to the Fraser to carry on their trade because major fishing grounds in the United States such as the Sacramento and Columbia Rivers were facing serious depletion. There were widespread complaints among local residents during the 1890's about Americans obtaining fishing licenses in the Fraser by fraud and misrepresentation regarding their citizenship. 114/ Growing numbers of Indians were also migrating annually from communities as far north as Port Simpson, near Prince Rupert, for fishing and cannery work on the Fraser. By far the most serious competition, as mentioned before, came from Japanese immigrants who began concentrating in the lower Fraser River district during the early 1890's.

The beginning of a severe depression and mass unemployment in 1893 accentuated competition in the fishing industry and sharpened group antagonisms, particularly towards Orientals. There was a rising chorus of complaints from Fraser River fishermen against "indiscriminate and illegal" granting of fishing licences to Chinese and Japanese, "thereby starving out the white man." 115/ Support was enlisted from the local Trades and Labour Council in a campaign to have the federal Department of Fisheries reduce the number of licences granted to Orientals.

Out of this situation the first important union of fishermen in British Columbia, the Fraser River Fishermen's Protective Union, was organized in New Westminster in the spring of 1893. By the beginning of the fishing season in July it claimed a membership of 1,600. On July 14 the newly organized union led a short and unsuccessful strike against cannery operators of the Fraser River in support of a demand for a 50 cent per diem wage increase, from \$2.50 to \$3.00. 116/

A pattern of organized conflict that was to become familiar in a number of subsequent disputes in the Fraser River fishing industry immediately developed in the 1893 strike. Cannery operators first attempted to replace striking white fishermen with Japanese and Indians. This move brought strong reactions from the union. Strikers were accused of using "violence and intimidation and other equally pernicious methods" in attempting to prevent strike-breakers from fishing. 117/ Cannery operators placed advertisements in local newspapers and posters offering a cash reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of anyone practising violence, intimidation, or property damage in support of the strike. Special police were stationed along the river to deal with the situation and a number of unionists were arrested. 118/

The role of the Indians, including fishermen and their women-folk working in the canneries, was significant in this and subsequent disputes prior to World War I. At that time they appear to have been a fairly cohesive, unified group in their indigenous "band" organizations under the leadership of chiefs. Hostility to the Japanese, which they shared with the whites, led them to line up solidly with the strikers despite pressure from cannery operators and the local Indian agent. In fact, as the course of events in the 1893 strike showed, they had a greater measure of solidarity than had the whites, who comprised a rather motley, disorganized element. According to the union secretary, the Indians "refrained from fishing to a man" and did not commence until a number of whites had already capitulated to the canners and gone back to work. 119/

The collapse of the strike of 1893 within a few days ended the first attempt to unionize the Fraser River salmon fishermen. Depression, with

the accompanying unemployment and intense competition for jobs, precluded any further attempts for several years. There was mounting antagonism among whites and Indians to the Japanese. Threats of "trouble" were reported in local newspapers 120/ but, aside from one or two small abortive strikes and isolated acts of violence, none developed on the Fraser until 1900.

Displacement of whites and Indians occurred at an accelerated pace from 1898 to 1901. The "boom" brought on by the gold-rush in the Yukon drew many of them out of the fishing industry into other employments. Cannerymen, complaining of a "labour shortage," replaced them with Japanese. By 1901 the latter held 1,958 out of a total of 4,722 fishing licenses in the province, as compared to 452 held by this group in 1896. In addition to these, 1,090 licences were issued to canneries, which used them mainly to employ Japanese fishermen. With two men to a boat and licence, the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration estimated that over 4,000 Japanese were engaged in the fishing industry, mainly in the Fraser River district. 121/

White fishermen charged that the Fraser River Cannerymen's Association was "flooding the river with cheap Japanese labour." With the help of professional union organizers from other trades, the British Columbia Fishermen's Union was organized during the winter of 1899, having one local in New Westminster directly chartered by the American Federation of Labor and one in Vancouver by the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada. 122/ Additional locals were later established in smaller Fraser Valley communities such as Eburne, Ladner, and Canoe Pass, and others were organized in Port Simpson, in northern British Columbia, and in Cowichan, Vancouver Island, among Indians who migrated to the Fraser each summer. A Grand

Lodge of British Columbia Fishermen was established in 1901, with headquarters in Vancouver, to co-ordinate the local fishermen's unions and extend the organization on an industry-wide basis. 123/ During the same period the Japanese organized their own union, the Fishermen's Benevolent Society, under the patronage of the Japanese consul. 124/

These developments, as would be expected, led to trouble. Strikes of unprecedented scope and violence, each involving as many as 8,000 fishermen and allied workers, occurred in the Fraser River district in 1900 and again in 1901. The announced objective of both strikes was higher fish prices from the Cannery Association, and in the beginning all three racial groups, whites, Indians, and Japanese, co-operated. Both strikes, however, soon developed into an open struggle of whites and Indians against Japanese. Because of language difficulties, racial discrimination, and lack of job opportunities in other industries, the Japanese were in a weaker bargaining position. They were held in line at first by the superior numbers and strength of the white and Indian strikers but, as time went on, growing numbers of them began fishing in defiance of the strikers. They were reported well-armed with rifles and ammunition for self-protection. 125/ The Fishermen's Union attempted to prevent strike-breaking by picketing the Fraser River and the Gulf of Georgia with a fleet of armed patrol boats. Mass demonstrations and parades led by the Port Simpson Indian Band were held to mobilize public support and maintain strike morale.

Violent clashes occurred in both strikes between union patrols and Japanese strike-breakers. Shots were fired on several occasions but apparently no one was hit, though there were numerous false reports in circulation about Japanese fishermen being drowned and dead bodies being found in

the water. In the 1901 dispute union patrols adopted the practice of marooning Japanese strike-breakers on an uninhabited island in the Gulf of Georgia, after sinking their nets and setting their boats adrift. Cannery operators again offered substantial rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction of strikers engaged in violence or intimidation. Special details of provincial police were stationed along the Fraser River and several strikers, including leading union officials, were arrested.

The strike of 1900 ended on a melodramatic note after three weeks. The Japanese fishermen, after repeated negotiations with cannery representatives, agreed to start fishing in a body, more than 2,000 strong, if guaranteed sufficient protection against white and Indian strikers. This was provided accordingly. Martial Law was declared in Steveston, centre of the canning industry of the Fraser, in which practically all the Japanese resided. One hundred and fifty militiamen of the Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles were each issued ten rounds of ammunition and an additional ten in reserve with orders to "shoot to kill if the need should arise." 126/ The strike ended in a compromise and the white and Indian strikers resumed fishing a few days later. 127/

The strike of 1901 ended less spectacularly but no more favourably to the Fishermen's Union. The latter was apparently unable to cope with the organized strike-breaking of the Japanese, coupled with the numerous arrests of pickets and union leaders. Through the mediation of a group of Vancouver businessmen the strike was settled on terms practically identical to those originally offered by the Cannery Association. 128/

The conflicts on the Fraser had repercussions in other major fishing districts hundreds of miles up the coast, such as Rivers Inlet and the

Skeena and Nass Rivers. Indians were predominant among the fishermen and cannery workers in these districts prior to World War I and they appear to have been a fairly cohesive group. Only small numbers of whites and Japanese fished in the northern districts at that time, owing to the long distances from major population centres, the high transportation costs, and, in comparison to the Fraser, the low prices which fishermen received.

Several minor disputes arose between fishermen and cannery operators in the Skeena during the early 1890's. 129/ One large but short-lived strike in Rivers Inlet in 1899 involved some 2,500 fishermen and cannery workers. 130/ A strike of some 800 fishermen on the Skeena in 1904 lasted the entire season. The Indians were the active participants in both of these disputes. Whites and Japanese were reported satisfied with the prices offered by the canners, but refrained from fishing until the Indians had settled their differences with cannery operators. 131/

A period of relatively stable relations between fishermen and cannery operators was maintained on the Fraser River for several years after the 1901 strike. Unusually small salmon runs, coupled with reduced competition for employment in the industry, enabled fishermen to receive higher prices for their catches. Immigration of Japanese to British Columbia was at a virtual standstill during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, while their numbers employed in the Fraser actually declined owing to migration to other fishing centres of the province. The Fraser River Cannery Association maintained collective bargaining relations with both the Fishermen's Union and the Japanese Fishermen's Benevolent Society.

There were negotiations and overtures towards affiliation of the British Columbia Fishermen's Union with a newly-formed United States

organization known as the Fishermen's Protective Union of the Pacific Coast and Alaska. The latter had set itself the ambitious task of "uniting in one great common brotherhood all of the fishermen seeking a livelihood in the waters of the Pacific Coast and Alaska." 132/ Little came of this attempt.

Japanese immigration and displacement of whites and Indians on the Fraser increased sharply after the end of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905. The Fishermen's Union rapidly declined. Its last gesture was an attempted strike on June 25, 1907, against a cut in the price of spring salmon paid by canners. Only 125 fishermen responded and the strike quickly collapsed. 133/ The union went out of operation shortly afterward.

The Japanese were numerically the largest group fishing in the Fraser River by 1913. Of the fishing licences issued that year on the river, they held 1,088 as compared to 832 for whites and 430 for Indians. 134/ The respective roles of these three racial groups had become almost the exact reverse of the situation in 1900 and 1901. This became apparent in a strike of some 2,500 fishermen and allied workers that occurred during August, in protest against a price cut announced in mid-season by the Fraser River Canners' Association. The Japanese were reported "completely organized, with union hall and officers." 135/ The whites, "being of all nationalities besides English-speaking", lacked organization, as did the Indians. Fishermen of both the latter groups were reported to favour a compromise with the canners, but the organized Japanese, who had called the strike, kept them in line for two days. The Vancouver branch of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) attempted to organize white and Indian fishermen during the strike but was unsuccessful. 136/ There were several

reports of the use of violence, intimidation, and property damage by Japanese unionists against white and Indian strike-breakers, reminiscent of the tactics employed by whites and Indians against Japanese strike-breakers in 1900 and 1901. Newspaper accounts told of guns being pointed at strike-breakers to force them to cease fishing, of nets being cut and fish thrown back in the water. 137/

A renewed attempt was made during the spring of 1914 to organize white and Indian fishermen on the Fraser River. This time the initiative was taken by the New Westminster Board of Trade for the announced purpose of "driving the Japanese from the River", on the alleged grounds that they "annually diverted one million dollars (of earnings) from local channels of trade and sent it to an alien land." 138/ After several meetings of local fishermen and businessmen the Fraser River Fishermen's Protective Association (FRFPA) was formed in May 1914 and the familiar demand for a drastic reduction in the fishing licences to be granted to Japanese was voiced in numerous resolutions sent to the federal Department of Fisheries. 139/ Little came of this new effort for the time being. The FRFPA remained in a moribund state for several years. The Fraser River salmon canning industry had already gone into a serious decline occasioned by a rock-slide up-river, at Hell's Gate, which prevented large numbers of salmon from spawning. The industry did not begin to revive in this district until well on in the 1920's.

Railroad Construction and Other Industries.

Labour unrest and conflict was mounting in scope and intensity in other industries besides coal mining and fishing during 1911 and 1912. In British Columbia, and over Canada as a whole, strikes reached a prewar record

in those years, in frequency, numbers of workers involved and man-days lost. As well as the major strikes in coal mining and the large but brief one in fishing, there was, as noted earlier, the "general" strike of more than 4,000 building trades workers in Vancouver in a demand for higher wages and the union shop. And there were also, as noted earlier in discussing railway transportation, a series of strikes in the construction phase of that industry. Here the main leadership lay in the hands of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

Among the numerous left-wing labour movements organized in British Columbia prior to World War I, the IWW left almost no permanent mark in that province because it could make little or no ideological or organizational headway in the already organized and committed sectors. The one major unorganized industry was lumber, but the IWW, in a continuing effort stretched over several years, had little success in organizing the woodworkers against the strong and at times violent opposition of the lumber companies, though, reputedly, they improved camp conditions to some extent. The small and isolated camps with their high labour turnover proved too difficult. 140/

The "wobblies" did, however, as Phillips puts it, "find highly fertile organizational ground among general labourers and in the railway construction camps, where the combination of migratory labour, primitive conditions and isolation, created an explosive social situation." 141/

The inferior working conditions prevalent in many of these camps were described earlier, in discussing the Report of a special Royal Commission of investigation. Despite new legislation, conditions apparently were not much improved for several years after its passage.

The first major strike among these workers occurred early in 1911, among the street labourers of Prince Rupert, which was developing rapidly as the western terminus of the proposed Grand Trunk Railway. The strike began for wage increases on March 6, with 250 men, but soon involved more than 1,100 and became violent. As described in the Labour Gazette:

Several riots took place in the course of this dispute as the contractors attempted to resume work with new hands, and one man was seriously wounded. Fifty-six arrests were made and normal conditions were resumed about April 8, many of the strikers having left the city and the places being filled. 142/

Unmentioned in this report was the use of the cruiser "Rainbow" to help suppress the strike. The number of men arrested was too large for existing jail facilities and a special stockade had to be built. 143/

The first major strike in the railway camps proper, involving some 6,000 men, occurred early in 1912 from April 1, to June 12 along the main line of the Canadian Northern in the Fraser Valley. 144/ The Industrial Worker, official paper of the IWW, explained the strike as arising from intolerable living conditions:

...the main thing that caused the walkout was the foul condition of the camps in which the men were herded.... In one of the Tierney camps the bunks were built three tiers high and the men after waking each morning with raging headaches, tore down the top bunk.... In other camps the floors were laid directly upon the ground instead of 18 inches above (as required by law) insufficient air space was allowed, and wash houses, dry houses and bath houses were of the vilest sort. 145/

While there was no formal cessation of the strike, normal operations had been resumed after some two and a half months. Provincial government despatch of a force of special police apparently prevented violence on any serious scale.

A month after this walkout ended another developed among 3,000 men employed on the Grand Trunk Pacific from Prince Rupert to Hazelton. The strike, again under IWW leadership, lasted only a month, and most of the strikers were replaced. Several others, ranging in size from 400 to 1,500 men, broke out in 1913 on various railway construction projects. 146/

Strikes in railway construction ended in British Columbia in 1913 and the IWW rapidly declined. Large numbers of workers were displaced by the completion of most of the major railway construction, and they added to the serious unemployment generated by the depression of 1913.

Unemployment for a brief period became the main new issue generating unrest, conflict and repression in a pattern that was to be repeated many times in British Columbia in later years. The IWW and the socialists took the lead in organizing protest meetings and demonstrations to demand relief, under the slogan "Parade Your Poverty". Labour speakers were jailed and demonstrations broken up by police action in cities and towns in the Pacific Coast states as well as in British Columbia. The Mayor of Vancouver reversed a traditional city policy and banned all "radical" meetings. On January 28 Parm Pettipiece, a prominent union official and city alderman, addressed a crowd at the Powell Street grounds to report on a meeting with Premier McBride in Victoria, in an unsuccessful attempt to obtain unemployment relief from the provincial government. As he was speaking, the crowd was charged by a squad of mounted, club-wielding police who injured numerous spectators, some seriously. Heading the list of those arrested was Alderman Pettipiece.

As Phillips recounts subsequent developments:

The result of this 'bloody Sunday' was a committee composed of the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council, the IWW and the Socialist Party, organized to fight for free speech and work for the unemployed. The committee defended those charged and succeeded in getting acquittals for three, including Pettipiece, although several others were jailed for three to six months for unlawful assembly. For several months the campaign for free speech continued and then, almost as quickly as it had begun, the ban was relaxed and conditions returned to normal. 147

THE PRAIRIE PROVINCES

The Prairie Provinces, as would be expected in view of their predominantly agricultural economies and limited industrial development, accounted for only a very minor part of the industrial unrest of the pre-War I period, at least as measured by strikes and lockouts. The only ones of importance have been described briefly earlier, namely one of building trades and one of street railwaymen, both in Winnipeg, as well as some strikes of railway workers that extended into or involved this region. The most intensive centre of conflict, as discussed earlier, was the coal mining area of southwestern Alberta and southeastern British Columbia.

The main expressions of industrial unrest, in the broad sense of the term, were manifested by grain farmers and their supporters rather than by industrial workers. Almost from the beginning of settlement in the Prairies, strong conflicts of interest developed between farmers and "Eastern" financial, business, and industrial groups, as well as with local urban business interests represented by such institutions as the Winnipeg Grain Exchange. Hardships and losses sustained by grain farmers having to ship their produce east to the Great Lakes, via the single-track CPR line, led to mounting agitation and pressure on the federal and provincial governments to end

the CPR's monopoly, charter new transcontinental railways, double the CPR's tracks to the Great Lakes and build more "feeder" lines. The CPR's policy of granting exclusive local monopolies to elevator companies, and refusing to load farmers' grain on box cars except at designated shipping points, aroused special resentment that on occasion provoked mass demonstrations and threatened mob violence. High freight costs and prices for imported goods, high tariff protection on machinery and other manufactured goods required by grain farmers, allegedly exorbitant interest rates and inadequate credit facilities, all constituted additional sources of dissatisfaction, unrest and hostility to "Eastern interests" and "monopolies".

Such issues contributed to a pattern of organized agitation, a distinct ideology and political action broadly identified as "Western radicalism". In the pre-war period its main specific expression was the organization of cooperative marketing organizations and grain elevator facilities in competition with private interests. Subsequently, after the war, it was to lead to the formation of progressive and radical political parties that achieved a measure of power.

It is perhaps reasonable to suppose that the climate of agrarian agitation had considerable impact on the ranks of organized labour in the region, such that it became a major centre of intense and at times violent industrial unrest and conflict in later years.

SUMMARY REVIEW, 1900-1913

Labour organization and industrial conflict showed a pronounced upward trend, accompanying the rapid growth of the Canadian economy from the turn of the century to World War I. Within this trend were pronounced cycles.

One peak period of conflict occurred in 1903, which experienced the largest number of men involved in strikes in any one year prior to the War. The two main centres of conflict were Vancouver, B.C., in which a strike of railway workers rapidly spread to other rail centres in the west, and won sympathetic support from workers in a number of other trades; and Montreal, in which a strike of longshoremen likewise spread to other centres and won sympathetic support from other trades. Independent of these, there were also large strikes of boot-and-shoe workers in Quebec and of coal miners on Vancouver Island and in the eastern British Columbia-western Alberta region.

Strikes fell off sharply over the next two years, in numbers, size and duration, then rose year by year to reach new levels of intensity as the economy approached the peak of the pre-war boom during 1911-12. Walkouts of textile workers in Quebec in 1908 reached almost industry-wide proportions. Strikes reached new records in man-days lost in 1911, and in numbers in 1912. The year 1911 also had strikes of the longest average duration, i.e., 68 days, in Canada's history, before or since. This was accounted for mainly by the long-drawn-out strikes of coal miners in Nova Scotia and in the British Columbia-Alberta border region.

The Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, passed in 1907, appears to have had limited effect in terms of its main announced purpose, i.e., the prevention and settlement of disputes, particularly in the very industry for which it was specially designed, namely coal mining. This industry dominated the strike scene during the pre-war period, with two year shutdowns in Nova Scotia in 1909-11 and on Vancouver Island in 1912-14, as well as an 8-month shutdown of virtually the entire coal mining area of eastern British Columbia and Alberta in 1911. Other large strikes of building construction and railway workers also occurred during this period.

The pre-war boom was followed by depression and unemployment in 1913 and 1914, and with it the end to the first distinct phase of Canada's evolving labour movement and pattern of industrial conflict.

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- 77/ Ibid., p. 131.
- 78/ Labour Gazette, Vol. III, 1902-03, p. 265; Vol. IV, 1903-04, Orr, op. cit., p. 192.
- 79/ Minutes, op. cit., p. 784; Orr, op. cit., p. 119.
- 80/ Minutes, op. cit., p. 753; Orr, p. 122-3.
- 81/ Quoted from Orr, op. cit., p. 237.
- 82/ Report, op. cit., pp. 41, 49; Orr, op. cit., p. 126.
- 83/ Minutes, op. cit., pp. 406-7; 419, 432, 441, 447; Orr, op. cit., p. 147.
- 84/ Report, op. cit., p. 63.
- 85/ Orr, op. cit., p. 187.
- 86/ Labour Gazette, Vol. IV, 1903-04, p. 337.
- 87/ Sir William Mulock to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, April 4, 1903, Laurier Papers, Microfilm. Letters relating to British Columbia, Provincial Archives, Victoria. Quoted from Orr, op. cit., p. 12.

- 88/ Ibid.
- 89/ Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., p. 3, Nanaimo Free Press, May 9, 1903, p. 1; Orr, op. cit., p. 15.
- 90/ Labour Gazette, Vol. V., 1904-05, p. 325.
- 91/ Ibid., 1905-06, p. 67.
- 92/ See King's report in Labour Gazette, Vol. VI, 1905-06, p. 421, et. seq.
- 93/ Phillips, op. cit., p. 58.
- 94/ These included the British Columbia Federation of Labour, the Trades and Labour Councils of Vancouver and of Victoria, the United Mine Workers of America, the I.W.W., the Social Democratic Party, and the Socialist Party of Canada (Phillips, p. 60).
- 95/ Labour Gazette, Vol. XV, 1914-15, p. 273.
- 96/ Bjarnason, op. cit., p. 46.
- 97/ Labour Gazette, Vol. XIV, 1913-14, pp. 931-32.
- 98/ Phillips, p. 61.
- 99/ Bjarnason, p. 50.
- 100/ Labour Gazette, Vol. II, 1901-02, p. 376.
- 101/ Ibid., Vol. III, 1902-03, p. 799.
- 102/ Ibid., April 1903, p. 674; also 1903-04, p. 660. One ugly incident involving mob action and violence occurred during this dispute. It was described in the Labour Gazette as follows: "On March 19...a masked mob of between 50 and 70 men compelled two employees engaged at the boiler house at Coal Creek to leave their work. They then forcibly entered a house where four other employees were sleeping, and seized them. With these six the crowd marched some distance beyond Fernie and, after ordering them not to return on pain of death, it dispersed. The police were not able to catch up with the mob. However, they found and brought back five of the men who had been driven away. They did not bear any marks of ill-treatment. A few arrests were made subsequently. The Miners Union repudiated the whole occurrence, maintaining they were not in any way responsible for it, and on the following night they appointed several of their members to assist the police in protecting Fernie." (Ibid.)
- 103/ Bjarnason, p. 52.
- 104/ Labour Gazette, Vol. VII, 1906-07, pp. 559, 684, 770.
- 105/ Ibid., Vol. VII, 1906-07, pp. 647-770.

- / H.D. Woods and Sylvia Ostry, Labour Policy and Labour Economics in Canada, Macmillan, Toronto, pp. 258-60.
- 107 / Labour Gazette, 1907-08, p. 1826; Bjarnason, pp. 53-54.
- 108 / Bjarnason, p. 55.
- 109 / Labour Gazette, Vol. X, 1909-10, p. 797.
- 110 / Bjarnason, p. 57.
- 111 / Labour Gazette, Vol. XII, 1911-12, pp. 541-64.
- 112 / Ibid., Vol. XII, 1911-12, pp. 541-64; Bjarnason, pp. 57-8.
- 113 / The account in this section is drawn mainly from the historical study by Stuart Jamieson and Percy Gladstone in two articles, "Unionism in the Fishing Industry in British Columbia", in the February and May, 1950 issues of the Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science.
- 114 / Vancouver World, July 24, 1893, p. 2.
- 115 / Ibid., June 7, 1893, p. 8.
- 116 / Fishermen at this time were being paid a flat daily wage. From the late 1890's on they were paid on a piece-rate basis (per fish, per pound. etc.) and from their earnings the canneries and fishing companies deducted rental payments for boat and gear.
- 117 / Ibid. July 15, 1893 p. 2.
- 118 / Ibid.
- 119 / Ibid., July 24, 1893, p. 2.
- 120 / Ibid., July 17, 1896.
- 121 / Report (Ottawa, 1902, p. 390).
- 122 / Daily Province, Vancouver Aug. 27, 1900, p. 8; B.C. Federationist, Dec. 27, 1912, p. 5.
- 123 / Labour Gazette, Vol II, 1901-02, p. 488.
- 124 / Daily Province, Aug. 4, 1901.
- 125 / Ibid., July 9, 1901, p. 1.
- 126 / Ibid., July 24, 1900, p. 1.
- 127 / The most detailed and well documented account of this conflict is provided in Keith Ralston, op. cit.
- 128 / Daily Province, July 19, 1901, p. 1.

- 129 / Field notes and interviews.
- 130 / Vancouver World, June 20, 1899, p. 1.
- 131 / Daily Province, Vancouver, June 23, 1904, p. 1.
- 132 / The Fishermen of California, published by the International Fishermen and Allied Workers of America, CIO, San Francisco, California, January 1947, p. 76.
- 133 / Daily Province, July 27, 1907, p. 7.
- 134 / Ibid., Aug. 4, 1913, p. 4.
- 135 / Ibid., p. 1.
- 136 / Ibid., Aug. 5, 1913, p.1.
- 137 / Ibid., p. 20.
- 138 / B.C. Federationist, May 22, 1914, p.2.
- 139 / Loc. cit.
- 140 / Phillips, op. cit., p. 52.
- 141 / Loc cit.
- 142 / Labour Gazette, Vol. XI, 1910-11, p. 1296.
- 143 / Phillips, op. cit., p. 53.
- 144 / Labour Gazette, Vol XIII, 1912-13, p. 871.
- 145 / Quoted in Phillips, p. 53.
- 146 / Labour Gazette, V. supra.
- 147 / Phillips, p. 55.

CHAPTER III

RADICALISM AND REACTION: WORLD WAR I AND THE POSTWAR TRANSITION, 1914-1920

Trade unionism and industrial conflict in Canada underwent a new and particularly concentrated and intense cycle of decline, growth and decline prior to, during and immediately after World War I, on a pattern broadly similar to that of the United States. Strikes fell to a low point after the depression of 1913 and the outbreak of war in 1914. Trade union membership had reached a pre-war peak of 176,000 in 1913. By the end of 1915 it had fallen by almost 20% to 143,000. 1/ Strikes and lock-outs fell to their lowest point, in frequency, workers involved and days lost during 1914 and 1915, since figures had first been compiled on a systematic basis by the Department of Labour in Ottawa. This general decline could be attributed mainly to the depression and severe unemployment of 1913-14 and further dislocations in trade, industry and finance during the early months of the war.

Thereafter for several years the cycle was sharply reversed. From its low point of 143,000 in 1915, total union membership in Canada almost trebled within four years to 378,000 in 1919, a figure it was not to attain again for almost 20 years. 2/ Strikes and other manifestations of unrest and conflict likewise mounted sharply in scope and intensity during the

latter years of the war and immediate post-war period, reaching a dramatic climax in the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919.

Coal mining was again the industry most affected by strikes, though not to the same extent as in the previous period. During 1914-20, inclusive, it accounted for roughly 12% of all strikes, 20.5% of all workers involved and 23% of all time loss in the country. 3/

More significant, in some respects, was the establishment of unions and participation in strike action among workers in a wide list of other industries and trades that hitherto had remained largely unorganized. Most notable of these were logging and sawmilling, mostly in British Columbia, metal manufacturing, and some hitherto non-union fields of employment such as public service.

The later years of the war were marked by a multiplicity of small strikes of relatively brief duration. Practically all the large strikes, involving more than 1,000 workers, were in coal mining, particularly in the eastern British Columbia—western Alberta district. Two notable exceptions were a strike of 4,500 clothing workers in Montreal that lasted from January 12 to March 19, 1917, and one of 1,600 smelter employees at the Consolidated Mining and Smelting Co. operations at Trail, British Columbia, during November and December the same year. 4/

One of the most important factors underlying the mounting unrest of the late war and immediate post-war years was the inflationary price spiral. The cost of living index had remained virtually unchanged until the end of 1915. It jumped from then on, by 8% in 1916, more than 18% in 1917, and 13½% in 1918. 5/ Rising prices, widespread suspicion of wartime profiteering, and labour unrest, brought the federal government increasingly into

areas normally under provincial jurisdiction. In March 1916, the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act (IDIA) was extended to cover all war industries, including mining and transportation as well as shipbuilding and munitions manufacturing. The federal government also passed a special order-in-council outlawing hoarding and "artificial" price increases, but the lack of adequate inspection and enforcement machinery rendered it of limited effect.

The growing federal power, and passage of emergency wartime legislation which large minorities in the ranks of organized labour felt to be unduly restrictive, appear to have been another factor contributing to mounting labour agitation, unrest and conflict. In 1916 the federal government passed an order-in-council under the War Measures Act calling for national registration and an inventory of the labour force, and in 1917 conscription for military service came into force. This not only led to riots, violence and use of military forces in Quebec, but also contributed to a sharp rift, and after the war an open break, between the Trades and Labour Congress and its more important affiliates in the western provinces. These developments, in turn, were major factors contributing to the unprecedented scale and intensity of industrial and civil conflict in the immediate post-war period.

COAL MINING

World War I initially had a disruptive impact on coal mining in Canada, particularly in Nova Scotia. The European market was cut off by shortages of shipping and other difficulties; the steel industry, one of Nova Scotia's largest coal consumers, slumped with the cessation of railway building; and sales to New England and Quebec declined. Unemployment, part-time work and loss of earnings remained serious until well on into 1916. Agreements were renewed in 1915, in both Nova Scotia and the eastern British Columbia

districts, with virtually no wage increases, and no strikes, 6/ despite rising prices.

The situation changed rapidly as the war continued. The increased demand for coal, the rising cost of living, and a growing labour shortage in the coal mines generated increasing unrest and militancy among miners. There developed a drive for large wage increases to compensate for the previous declines they had suffered in real wages over a period of several years.

Nova Scotia

In Nova Scotia the usually conciliatory Provincial Workmen's Association (PWA), which had won out over the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) prior to the war, became more aggressive. Under pressure from an increasingly restive membership it won a series of sizeable wage increases ranging from 6% to 10% during later 1916 and 1917. These failed to satisfy the miners. Another wave of conflict threatened when the UMWA began a renewed organizational drive in the Maritimes.

In March 1917 the PWA and the UMWA applied for boards of conciliation under the IDIA. The Department of Labour appointed a Royal Commission instead. This body, perhaps fearing a repetition of the costly conflict of 1909-11, persuaded the unions to amalgamate in order to eradicate "a feeling of discord resulting from the presence in the same field of two rival labour organizations." 7/

The new organization, the Amalgamated Mine Workers of Nova Scotia, was able to negotiate substantially larger wage increases than its predecessor, with an agreement providing for revision of wage rates every six months in

accordance with changes in the cost of living. These gains prevented any serious disputes developing in the industry. Finally, in 1918, the new organization affiliated with the UMWA. 8/

Alberta and Eastern British Columbia

Labour relations were considerably more turbulent in the eastern British Columbia—Alberta coal fields during the war and led the federal government to institute special measures to stabilize the situation. During the summer of 1916 there was a short strike of some 3,600 miners demanding a 10% war bonus. It was settled temporarily by a $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ increase. This did not long satisfy the men in the face of rapidly rising prices. The Executive Board of UMWA's District 18 adopted a resolution demanding, as of November 1, either (a) a war bonus of 25% or (b) the establishment of a commission to establish bonuses commensurate with the rising cost of living. This demand was supported by a brief strike of some 5,000 men throughout the district. The strike ended with the appointment, by order-in-council, of a special Commissioner to report on wages and cost of living to the Minister of Labour. 9/

A few weeks later, in mid-January, the war bonus still not having been granted, a new strike involving some 5,870 men spread across the district. It was ended after two weeks through the intervention of the federal Minister of Labour, who arranged a bonus of \$1.75 weekly. 10/

During negotiations for a renewal of the existing contract, in April 1917 a 15% wage increase was agreed upon. The men, however, refused to sign the agreement unless a special "penalty clause", which had been forced upon them under the adverse circumstances of 1915, was removed. Agreement

could not be reached on this point. Strikes and lockouts then developed at the various collieries of the Western Coal Operators' Association, ultimately involving an estimated 7,475 men. 11/ All attempts at conciliation failed.

The federal government finally appointed a Director of Coal Operations in southeastern British Columbia and Alberta. He immediately directed that the mines be re-opened on July 3, after a 3-month shutdown, under the terms of the tentative agreement previously negotiated, but with the penalty clause omitted and an additional wage increase of $7\frac{1}{2}\%$. A cost-of-living commission was appointed and directed to meet every four months to adjust wages accordingly. 12/

These measures sufficed to prevent serious labour trouble in District 18 for the duration of the war. The only strike of importance was a one-month shutdown, during September and October 8, 1918, by 1,183 miners at Fernie and Michel, B.C., in demanding single shift operations. They contended that the existing method of working two shifts did not allow sufficient time for gas to escape and therefore created a serious safety hazard. The provincial Minister of Mines intervened and announced that he would introduce legislation at the next session of the legislature to make single shifts obligatory in all coal mines in the province except in times of national emergency. This offer failed to satisfy the men. Finally, the Director of Coal Operations ordered the Crowsnest Pass Coal Company to convert to the single shift at its mines and announced that he would ask the Minister of Mines to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate and report on the issue. This served to end the strike on October 8, 1918. 13/

Vancouver Island

Throughout the war and immediate post-war period, labour relations in the coal fields of Vancouver Island, in contrast to eastern British Columbia and Alberta, remained, superficially at least, quiescent. Following the long strike of 1912 to 1914, the two main Island operators had, in accordance with the terms of settlement of that strike, conducted their wage negotiations with committees of their employees, according no recognition to unions. Local unions of coal miners continued to exist, but to no real effect. The cost of living pattern of wage adjustment adopted elsewhere was followed on the Island. 14/

WESTERN REVOLT

The strong radical influence in the labour movement in British Columbia that developed prior to the war has been discussed earlier. Various disruptive developments during the war itself, particularly inflation, conscription and federal suppression of civil liberties, sharpened this radical orientation and brought the movement into conflict with the main body of organized labour, represented by the Trades and Labour Congress, (TLC), as well as with the federal government.

At a meeting of the combined executives of the British Columbia Federation of Labour and the Vancouver, Victoria and New Westminster Trades and Labour Councils in December 1916, a resolution was passed calling on workers to refuse to sign registration cards for national registration which the federal government had recently introduced. At a convention of the British Columbia Federation of Labour in January 1917, a new slate of officers was elected who were almost all identified as left-wing radicals and

members or supporters of the Socialist Party. Among other motions it passed one censuring the TLC for endorsing national registration.

When conscription was instituted in June 1917, the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council passed a resolution calling for a general strike. In conjunction with the Socialist Party, it held mass protest meetings. It was supported by similar action on the part of the British Columbia Federation of Labour. The position taken by these bodies was that "conscription of wealth, production and distribution should precede conscription of men."

Early in August 1917, the British Columbia Federation executive called a special convention in Vancouver for Labour Day. The delegates voted overwhelmingly in favour of a "general strike" against conscription. The strike, however, did not take place at that time. 15/

Other serious strikes developed, however, for wage increases to meet higher living costs. In mid-February 1917 there was talk of a general strike in the shipyards and metal trades in the Vancouver area to raise wages to the level agreed to in the United States. To head off trouble the federal government appointed a Royal Commission to investigate and recommend wage adjustments, but by the time it had submitted its report the situation had got out of hand. For two weeks in May the entire west coast shipbuilding industry in British Columbia was shut down before further benefits, including a cost of living adjustment, could be negotiated and the dispute settled. 16/ A strike by 1,350 street railwaymen and electrical workers in Vancouver, Victoria and New Westminster, and of postal workers in Victoria, likewise threatened to develop into a general strike before they were settled. 17/

Several further incidents added to labour tension on the west coast. The federal cabinet in Ottawa, during April and May 1917, issued special orders-in-council covering such matters as censorship and sedition. The office of the Socialist Party in Vancouver was raided and steps were taken to shut down publication of the Federationist, the official organ of the British Columbia Federation of Labour. These actions brought strong protest from organized labour throughout the province.

At the same time a series of events occurred that were to lead to the first "general" strike, on a metropolitan scale, in Canadian history. They are recounted at some length in Paul Phillips' history of organized labour in British Columbia. 18/

A prominent union leader, Albert ("Ginger") Goodwin, was a Vice President of the British Columbia Federation of Labour and organizer for the International Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers' Union, successor to the Western Federation of Miners. In 1917 he was reclassified by his draft board and called up for military service while leading a strike of his union against the Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company operations in Trail, British Columbia. He had previously been classed as physically unfit for military service. Goodwin, like a number of other anti-conscriptionists and "draft dodgers" at that time, "took to the woods". He was subsequently discovered and shot dead by a member of a special federal police corps searching for draft evaders.

Many in organized labour circles believed that Goodwin had been deliberately killed for his trade union activities and his strong opposition to conscription. He became a martyr in organized labour circles. His death provoked protest that mushroomed into a brief "general" strike, which in

turn provoked mob action by anti-union groups in a pattern becoming increasingly frequent in the United States during the latter stages of the war.

The Metal Trades Council of Vancouver called for a 24-hour "holiday" strike to start at noon of August 2, 1917 in protest against the shooting of Goodwin. This was endorsed by a virtually unanimous vote of the Trades and Labour Council. Unions of longshoremen, street railwaymen, metal trades, construction workers and service trades participated fully in the general shutdown. Only a few organizations, of teamsters, printers and telephone employees, refrained.

Business and community leaders in Vancouver were profoundly disturbed by the strike. The city's two main daily newspapers denounced it in vitriolic terms. On the evening that the strike began the Vancouver Labour Temple was raided by a group of several hundred returned veterans who did considerable damage to the premises and "beat up" two prominent union officials. Another riot broke out the next day at the longshoreman's union hall in a meeting between union and veteran delegations. 19/

Other developments further alienated strong elements in the organized labour movement in British Columbia and other western provinces. Measures enacted by the federal government, while serving to put a temporary lid on rising labour unrest, probably served to exacerbate the situation later. In early 1917, the government issued its War Labour Policy. A special order-in-council, P.C. 1743, called for collective bargaining, the right to organize, and the abolition of strikes and lockouts for the duration of the war. No effective measures were taken, however, to modify the bitter opposition of many employers to unions, and their refusal to recognize workers'

rights to organize and bargain collectively. Meanwhile, as prices continued to rise rapidly, the measure did not prevent strike losses reaching a new high the following year. Finally, just before the Armistice, compulsory arbitration was imposed, in effect, in the form of a special Order-in-Council prohibiting outright all work stoppages. It was revoked a few months later.

The second part of the federal government's policy was an order-in-council banning 14 radical organizations, including the Social Democratic Party and the IWW, though not the Socialist Party. It outlawed all efforts to bring about governmental, political, social, industrial or economic changes in Canada by force, or by the advocacy or defence of force. It also prohibited all meetings conducted in the Russian, Ukrainian or Finnish languages. This was followed by what could only be termed acts of intimidation. The Victoria Labour Council paper, The Week, and the Socialist Party paper, The Clarion, were suppressed. Workers caught with books published by the Charles Kerr Company, major publishers of socialist literature on this continent, were given prison sentences. 20/ Similar action was taken in other centres across the country.

These developments widened the rift that had opened between the Trades and Labour Congress, dominated by its predominantly conservative eastern affiliates, and the more radical representatives of the four western provinces. At the 1918 convention of the TLC in Quebec City, the western delegation lost on every issue it raised. Conscription was endorsed; release of conscientious objectors from imprisonment was opposed; a resolution opposing allied intervention to help crush the Russian revolution was tabled; and all moves to endorse industrial unionism were defeated. 21/

In an attempt to improve their position, the TLC delegates from the four western provinces met during the convention in a separate caucus where it was decided to hold a special "Western Labour Conference." At the time there was apparently no idea in mind of breaking with the TLC but merely of mobilizing western strength more effectively and expanding labour organization in the west.

An open break with the parent body developed space during the early months of 1919, however, with an increasingly militant and radical orientation of the British Columbia section. In February of that year the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council proclaimed a general strike referendum on the issue of free speech. It was supported by sixteen of the seventeen unions replying. The Victoria Council joined Vancouver in favouring a general strike in support of the release of political prisoners, and voted to endorse the Soviet system. A general strike in Seattle was already in progress, fanning a wave of anti-Red hysteria and fears of a Bolshevik revolution. The situation in that city, in view of its close proximity to and extensive communications with Vancouver, aroused widespread publicity and interest. 22/

Disaffection with the prevailing union structure of the TLC became increasingly vocal. The Victoria Labour Council passed a resolution deploring the "innumerable divisions and factions" in organized labour and upholding the vision of "One Big Union." The final objective was pictured as "the workers as a class arrayed against the common enemy." A British Columbia Federation of Labour conference in Calgary in March, just before the Western Labour Conference, endorsed a resolution calling for industrial unionism and for the complete rejection of political pressure group techniques traditional to the TLC. The first clear evidence of a secession movement was

a resolution, which passed unanimously, calling for a referendum on the question of severing connection with the AFL-TLC internationals and forming "one big union." 23/

The Western Labour Conference was held in March 1919. It had 78 representatives from British Columbia, 89 from Alberta, 46 from Manitoba, 17 from Saskatchewan and 2 from Ontario. Most of the resolutions that were passed were repetitions of those previously adopted by the British Columbia convention. They endorsed socialism, industrial unionism, the 6-hour day, and an end to political repression and to political lobbying by labour leaders. A significant and highly publicized new move was the demand that the Conference's program be adopted, if all else failed, by means of a general strike to start on June 1. The most important part of the Conference, however, comprised the resolutions calling for the establishment of the One Big Union (OBU) as a formal organization.

Support for the proposed new organization came from a large number of existing union bodies, including the Vancouver and Victoria labour councils and most of their affiliated unions. Strong opposition, however, was expressed by a number of important union spokesmen, particularly those of craft organizations with AFL-TLC international affiliations. Before the OBU could be formally established the General Strike developed in Winnipeg.

THE WINNIPEG GENERAL STRIKE 24/

The mounting labour unrest of the late war and immediate post-war years reached a dramatic climax in the Winnipeg General Strike during May and June, 1919. This even had a strong, indeed almost a traumatic effect upon labour relations in the western provinces, and upon Canada's political life generally, for decades to come. As Kenneth McNaught wrote:

...the Winnipeg strike was a most significant occurrence in Canadian history, if for no other reason than that it was the first and only time in Canadian history that a majority was split clearly into two opposing classes. 25/

As such it exhibited many of the manifestations of tension, hostility and violence that had occurred, and were to occur, in many industrial disputes on this continent at the time. Notable among these were the Great Steel Strike in the United States, major lumber strikes in the Pacific northwest, and the general strike in Seattle, Washington. Union leadership on these occasions, by men who openly professed radical or revolutionary doctrines, generated fear bordering on hysteria among employers and their supporters, and among governments. Patriotic fervor aroused during the war, together with wartime propaganda and inflammatory newspaper accounts and editorials, added fuel to the flames. They incited violent and extremist reactions among various groups, in a pattern that has been described as "vigilantism," against unionism and strikes. These were accompanied by measures of severe legal repression, featuring the use of military forces to suppress strikes and the imposition of onerous jail sentences, deportations, and the like, by governments at all levels.

The general strike in Seattle, Washington, in February 1919 exhibited a number of features that were to be repeated in Winnipeg. It began with the Central Labour Council of that city supporting, by sympathetic strike action, a walkout of shipyard workers for higher wages. Various left-wing elements and personalities supported the strike, vocally and in their publications. Reactions from anti-union elements were, to put it mildly, extreme. They featured, among other things, inflammatory newspaper headlines, stories and editorials describing the strike, in effect, as "not a strike, but the beginnings of a Bolshevik revolution"; the formation of a violently anti-union "Citizens' Committee" under the leadership and sponsorship of leading

businessmen of the city; extremist statements and actions by the Mayor to win support from the city's more influential elements; and the dispatch of heavily-armed National Guardsmen and regular troops to maintain "Law and Order." 26/

The strike, on its part, was peaceful and orderly while it lasted. Union leaders counseled their members to remain home and stay off the streets; the flow of essential goods and services was maintained; and a special corps of returned men was recruited to prevent troublesome assemblies among strikers and to avoid violent clashes with anti-union elements or with police and the armed forces. 27/

The main repercussions of the strike came afterwards, as part of the nation-wide "Red Hysteria" and "Deportation Delirium" characteristic of the times. Dozens of unionists identified with the IWW or the Socialist Party and other radical elements were arrested and convicted to long terms of imprisonment for "seditious conspiracy." Federal immigration officials rounded up dozens of Russian, Italian and other immigrant workers from the Seattle area, herded them into two box cars known as the "Red Special" and sent them to Ellis Island for deportation to their homelands on suspicion of being "alien subversives." 28/

Far more violent repercussions were experienced in certain other communities in the Pacific northwest, most notably Centralia, Washington. An attack on the IWW hall by United States Legionnaires during an Armistice Day parade in 1919 led to defence by gunfire from the "wobblies," the deaths of four attackers, and the wounding of several others. In retaliation, an armed mob kidnapped an imprisoned IWW leader, castrated and shot him, and hung him by the neck from a nearby bridge. The perpetrators of

this crime were never identified, much less arrested or prosecuted. On the other hand, seven members of the IWW were subsequently tried for murder and sentenced to 25 to 40 years in prison as a consequence of their actions in defending their hall. 29/

It appears more than likely that the course of the Winnipeg general strike, and the attitudes and actions of organized labour, employers and governments, were strongly influenced by the general climate of 1919 and by events such as those described in Washington that year. This seems particularly likely in view of the radical orientation of the British Columbia labour movement, the brief general strike in Vancouver in 1918, and the leading role that the British Columbia Federation of Labour had played in the Western Labour Conference and in the formation of the One Big Union.

There had also been a mounting series of strikes in 1917 and 1918 in the Prairie provinces as elsewhere, culminating in a railway strike in Winnipeg that had threatened to become general in that city. These developments seem particularly important to keep in mind in helping explain the extreme reactions and policies of business groups and governments during the strike in Winnipeg. To quote McNaught again:

...the governments involved (those of Winnipeg, Manitoba and the Dominion) exhibited a remarkable unanimity (in viewing the strike as a revolutionary plot). Their point of view, at least in part, was the result of a general hysteria affecting most governments in North America, and the majority of business men, at the end of the First World War. The Russian Revolution was an accomplished fact. This increased, in many minds, the significance of leftist propaganda and organization in the New World. In the United States in the year 1919 the Red Scare rose to a crescendo, while in Canada there was prevalent the belief that the IWW forces were planning to combine with socialists and radical trade unionists, through the One Big Union, to overthrow constituted authority. 30/

One might add a further point to McNaught's analysis. As the history of industrial relations in Canada prior to the war brings out, employers in this country were for the most part strongly opposed to recognizing and dealing with unions. Where their position was seriously challenged, they were quick to call upon governments to provide police or military protection. There seem good grounds for suspecting, therefore, that much of the apparently hysterical behaviour of various employer groups in the immediate post-war era represented a calculated assault upon unionism as such, rather than any real fear of radicalism or revolution. Other elements in the Canadian community, with their particularly strong aversion to or fear of overt conflict in any form, seemed similarly quick to sanction the use of force to suppress such threats. World War I heightened such tendencies, as evidenced by the special orders-in-council that had been passed to curb or suppress organizations and publications that were deemed to be "dangerous" or "subversive." These regulations remained in effect long after the war.

In the light of these strongly conflicting forces and groups, and their divergent interpretations of events, it becomes extremely difficult to present an impartial and valid explanation of causes underlying the general strike in Winnipeg in 1919, or a reasonably accurate account of the main events that ensued. As Kenneth McNaught summarizes the picture, one view of the situation originated with the "Citizens' Committee of One Thousand." This was a semi-vigilante anti-union organization, on a familiar United States model, that was formed during the strike by a group of prominent business and professional men in the city. The view espoused by this group was accepted by the main governments involved, as well as by such publications as the Canadian Annual Review and the Cambridge History of the British Empire. It interpreted the strike largely as a conspiracy to establish a

Canadian-style soviet government which would "spread forth its power from the banks of the Red River." 31/

An opposing interpretation was expressed in a newspaper published by the strikers during the conflict and by the strikers' defence committee which was set up to combat the government indictments that followed. According to this view, the Winnipeg General Strike, like other major disputes during and immediately after the war, had no basic aims other than improvements in wages, working conditions and labours' bargaining position. The high cost of living, the threat of postwar unemployment, and the hostile attitudes of major employer groups towards unionism and collective bargaining were the main issues provoking the strike. 32/ This view found support in the findings of the Robson Commission of July 1, 1919, which had been appointed by the Manitoba government to investigate the causes of the strike. 33/ It was also supported by General Ketchen, commanding officer of the armed forces in the Winnipeg area at the time. 34/

A third interpretation of the strike, varying between these two positions, is represented in the writings of A.R.M. Lower's, Colony to Nation, Edgar McInnis', Canada, a Political and Social History, H.A. Logan's, Trade Unions in Canada and D.C. Masters', The Winnipeg General Strike.

Later evidence in addition to that offered by these authors, as presented by Kenneth McNaught in his A Prophet in Politics, would now seem to weigh the scales largely in favour of the second interpretation outlined above.

The origins of the general strike in Winnipeg were apparently unconnected with the debates and resolutions of the Western Labour Conference in

Calgary, such evidence suggests. The strike began with a walkout of workers in the building and metal trades in the city over demands for wage increases, and in protest against the refusal of employers to recognize and negotiate with the Metal Trades Council as a "bargaining unit" for its affiliated unions. The Building and Metal Trades Council then took their case to the Winnipeg Trades and Labour Council. This body ordered a vote among all of its affiliates on the question of a general strike, primarily to secure the principle of union security, and secondly, to achieve general wage increases to meet the soaring cost of living.

The result of the vote was an overwhelming majority in favour of a general strike. On May 15, 1919, approximately 30,000 workers left their jobs, including, significantly, about 12,000 who were not members of unions. 35/ Official interpretations of the event sought to prove that the general strike was the beginning of a grand conspiracy of the Calgary Conference and the One Big Union. D.C. Masters, in his authoritative history, however, shows that one man, D.B. Russell, was the sole direct link between the Conference and the Winnipeg Council's Strike Committee. 36/

As with the preceding general strike in Seattle, at the outset were established the two organizations which were to give the strike the aspect of a class conflict: the Central Strike Committee, elected by the General Strike Committee, composed of delegates from each of the unions affiliated with the Winnipeg Trades and Labour Council; and the Citizens Committee, an ad hoc group of prominent business and professional leaders, complete with an armed "home guard" to help maintain "law and order".

The Central Strike Committee took official steps to maintain the flow of essential goods and services as the strikers included public servants

such as policemen, firemen, postal workers and the employees of waterworks and other utilities, as well as the employees of private enterprises. As had been the case in Seattle, strikers were counselled to stay at home and avoid congregations in the streets that risked conflict with anti-union elements or with military forces.

The Citizens Committee, with the full support of the leading newspapers, the Free Press and the Tribune, characterized the strike as a revolutionary conspiracy, the work of a small group of red subversives and "alien scum", and thus justifying military intervention and suppression. 57/ Indeed, their activities could be construed as a deliberate effort to provoke an outbreak of violence that would justify intervention by the growing reserves of Mounted Police and militia as the strike dragged on.

Efforts to enlist the support of returned veterans to break the strike, the sort of move that was successful in most analogous cases in the United States at that time, failed. The day the strike started a meeting of returned soldiers was called by the executives of the Great War Veterans' Association, the Army and Navy Veterans' Association and the Imperial Veterans of Canada. The purpose of the executives of these organizations was to obtain passage of a resolution condemning the general strike. However, the executive resolution was defeated and another, strongly in favour of the strike, was passed. 38/

Various attempts to conciliate the dispute were blocked by the refusal of most employers in Winnipeg to recognize basic principles of collective bargaining. As McNaught puts it: "The familiar employers' insistence broke all mediation efforts: 'give up the strike, then bargain on our terms.'" 59/

Meanwhile the strike was winning sympathetic support across the country, in the form of minor "general strikes" extending from Prince Rupert, British Columbia to Sydney, Nova Scotia. Labour leaders in Winnipeg and some other western cities were beginning to call for a federal strike committee. 40/

These threats brought federal government intervention squarely on the side of employers and of the Citizens' Committee. This finally led to the strike's collapse. Senator Gideon Robertson, Minister of Labour, and Honourable Arthur Meighen, Minister of the Interior and Acting Minister of Justice, arrived on the scene. They confined their conferences to members of the Citizens Committee and to leaders of the provincial and municipal governments. This demonstration of partisanship brought strong criticism from spokesmen of the official opposition in the House of Commons. 41/

Senator Robertson's first action, on May 25, was to issue an ultimatum to the postal employees to the effect that unless they returned to work and severed relations with the Winnipeg Trades and Labour Council they would lose their pension rights and be barred from future employment in the federal service. Similar measures were taken by provincial and municipal government leaders against public service employees under their jurisdictions. 42/

From then on the forces of government at all levels moved in to defeat the strike, after provoking an increasing level of violence and taking severely repressive measures. On June 6, although there had been no serious violence, the Mayor of Winnipeg banned all parades and forbade the congregation of crowds. 43/ The same day Parliament quickly passed an amendment to the Immigration Act which extended to British subjects provisions concerning deportation by executive order. 44/ On June 9 the Winnipeg Police

Commission dismissed the entire police force, save a few top officers and two constables, ostensibly on the grounds that they had refused to sign a "yellow dog contract" agreeing to disaffiliate from the Trades and Labour Council and refuse to participate in sympathetic strikes. Special constables were enrolled to replace them. Their inexperience led to disturbances in which one of their members was injured. 45/

In the early hours of June 17 the Royal North West Mounted Police (RNWMP) raided various homes in Winnipeg and arrested ten strike leaders. Books, records and "seditious documents" discovered in their homes, and the Labour Temple of the Trades and Labour Council, were seized and kept as evidence at their trials. Newspapers announced that the British-born among the arrested were to be deported without trial, under the newly-amended Immigration Act. 46/ Execution of the government's policy had been handed over to A.J. Andrews of the Citizens' Committee, who was now, as legal agent of the federal Minister of Justice, in charge of prosecutions of the arrested men.

These developments rapidly built up tension in Winnipeg to a violent climax. McNaught describes it as follows:

June 21 was the "Bloody Saturday" which the Citizens' Committee had been predicting. It was occasioned by an illegal parade of returned soldiers organized as a result of Senator Robertson's alleged conspiracy with the leaders of the Citizens' Committee. The returned soldier supporters of the strike called a parade to form up near the city hall in order to march to the Royal Alexandra Hotel where Senator Robertson was ensconced. Their purpose was to request, through this mass demonstration, an account of the minister's plans with regard to the strike and of his actions since arriving in Winnipeg. [They] were no doubt spurred on by the fear of further governmental action to follow the arrests of June 17. The city was alive with Mounted Police, and all were aware that General Ketchen had alerted the militia units, and that a large number of machine guns had been shipped into Winnipeg.

But the parade was illegal since the mayor had earlier promulgated his order banning such demonstrations. The leaders maintained that the ban was an unconstitutional denial of the civil liberties for which they had recently fought....

On the morning of the parade Mayor Gray issued a proclamation warning that anyone taking part in it would do so at his own risk. As the parade itself was forming up the Mayor read the Riot Act. After that the machinery by which the parade was stopped was put into action.... 47/

The parade was broken up with an armed charge by the RNWMP. This action resulted in about 30 casualties, including one death. Sixteen of the casualties were among the public. 48/ What happened in the course of this charge has been variously interpreted. The Honourable N.W. Rowell, minister responsible for the RNWMP in his report to Parliament stated that:

...the first shots were fired by the paraders, or those associated with them, and the Mounted Police fired only in self-defence. The information that we have is that the police acted with great coolness, great courage, and great patience, as is characteristic of the men of the Royal North West Mounted Police. 49/

An account in the Western Labour News gave a more detailed but different version from that given in the Commons. Its description, in part, was as follows:

On Saturday, about 2:30 p.m. just the time when the parade was scheduled to start, some fifty mounted men swinging baseball bats rode down Main Street. Half were red-coated Royal North West Mounted Police, the others wore khaki. They quickened their pace as they passed the Union Bank. The crowd opened, let them through and closed in behind them. They turned and charged through the crowd again, greeted by hisses and boos, and some stones. There were two riderless horses with the squad when it emerged and galloped up to Main Street. The men in khaki disappeared at this point, but the redcoats reined their horses and reformed opposite the old post office.... Then, with revolvers drawn, they galloped down Main Street, and charged into the crowd on William Avenue, firing as they charged... The crowd dispersed as quickly as possible when the shooting began.... Lines of special police, swinging their big clubs, were thrown across Main Street and the intersecting thoroughfares. Dismounted redcoats lined up across

Portage and Main declaring the city under military control. Khaki-clad men with rifles were stationed on the street corners. 50/

D.C. Master's description seems to coincide with this latter account on most points, and adds a few details, as follows:

Before long the Mounties, immaculate in red or khaki coats, clattered along Portage and wheeled down Main. Armed with baseball bats they galloped into the crowd. Soon they were slowed to a walk in the seething mass of people, but still they pressed on, vigorously flailing out with their bats. They passed the City Hall, turned south and fought their way towards Portage amid a shower of tin cans, stones, bricks, and lumps of concrete. At length they reached McDermot Avenue, a sadly dishevelled group. Two of the horses were riderless.

Amid wild confusion the Mayor emerged on the front platform of the City Hall and read the Riot Act. His voice was drowned in bedlam. Again the Mounties came north and, as they did so, each transferred his club to the left hand and drew "an ugly-looking black revolver." They swung left on William Avenue and fired a volley into the crowd. They rounded the City Hall and slowed to a walk at the corner of Market and Main Streets. Again they drove into the crowd which was surging around a streetcar beleaguered and on fire in front of the City Hall. This the crowd was attempting to upset. The Mounties fired their second volley and Mike Sokolowski, who stood in front of the Manitoba Hotel, was shot in the heart and killed instantly. Other prostrate figures lay on the street and road. The Mounties continued southward. Opposite the Confederation Life Building they encountered another shower of missiles and fired a third volley. They reached McDermot Avenue and stopped for a few minutes to re-form.

As in many disturbances of this sort the question of who fired the first shot was later in dispute....

The Mounties had now broken the opposition. The rest was anticlimax. Again they galloped north, this time with revolvers in holsters. The crowd fled down side streets. At the corner of Main and Market they were met by several companies of specials on foot who had issued from the Rupert Street police station. The specials were in civilian attire with white arm-bands. Many of them carried batons. Some, judging by their clothes, were farmers. They had been mobilized in the station since 10 A.M. They came out in waves led by a detachment under a Captain Dunwoody. Now began the mopping-up operation. The specials formed lines at intervals of a block and swept Main Street clear of unauthorized persons.

The riot area, now clear, was surrounded by a cordon of specials, Mounties, and soldiers.

At 11 P.M. troops and police were withdrawn from the streets. The "riot" of June 21 was over. 51/

The riot and its suppression by armed force soon ended all organized resistance in Winnipeg. As described by Masters:

The strike continued for a short time longer in an atmosphere of gathering doom. Most of the leaders, although on bail, had undertaken not to resume activity. Those who had not been arrested were afraid that the blow would fall. The authorities had intervened and were maintaining control of the streets with armed force. Reduced to a state of terror, the Trades and Labour Council capitulated and announced the end of the strike on Wednesday, June 25, six weeks less one day from the beginning of the strike. 52/

The General Strike left a legacy of bitterness and controversy that was to last for decades. The eight strike leaders who had been arrested were brought to trial on charges of "conspiracy to bring into hatred and contempt the governments of the Dominion of Canada and the Province of Manitoba and to introduce a Soviet system of government." 53/ After trials that lasted for over a year, one of the leaders, R.B. Russell, was convicted and sent to the penitentiary for two years, five received one-year sentences, one a six-month sentence, and one was freed. The convictions were all based on the dubious assumption that the strike was the result of a conspiracy to overthrow the government, rather than a concerted struggle by organized labour in Winnipeg to secure the basic rights of recognition and collective bargaining.

REPERCUSSIONS IN OTHER PROVINCES

The Winnipeg General Strike, despite its crushing defeat, provided temporarily a strong wave of unionism and militancy across the country, particularly in the western provinces. Union membership and participation in

strikes reached unprecedented levels during 1919 and 1920.

The first repercussion from Winnipeg was a rash of "general" or "sympathetic" strikes, on a smaller scale, in various urban centres across the country. Most of these were of short duration.

Metal Trades Associations of the TLC in Calgary and in Toronto had presented demands to their respective employer groups similar to those in Winnipeg, which had initially provoked the general strike in that city. In Calgary, refusal of the employers to accede to the demands led to a strike by unions affiliated to the association, prior to that in Winnipeg. Subsequently, after the general strike in Winnipeg began, other unions in Calgary came out in support of the metal trades in a "general" strike. In Toronto, likewise, a general strike was called in sympathy with the metal trades but was ended within a few days. 54/

The impact of the Winnipeg strike was felt even as far east as Amherst, Nova Scotia. There again, a strike of metal workers won sympathetic support from other trades and involved 3,000 men from May 19 to June 21. 55/ While there was no direct connection between the two events, the Winnipeg strike had set an example which appealed to organized labour in some communities and stimulated similar patterns of action.

Other "general" strikes, in direct support of the major one in Winnipeg, broke out in a number of smaller western cities, including Brandon, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina, and Prince Albert. 56/

In Victoria, British Columbia, the Trades and Labour Council passed a resolution supporting a general sympathy strike. On June 23 some 4,800 workers walked off their jobs for a few days. A much smaller walkout had occurred in Prince Rupert late in May. 57/

Far overshadowing these was a 'sympathetic' strike of major proportions, but not "general" in magnitude, that developed in Vancouver on June 3, 1919, in support of the Winnipeg walkout. By vote, among unions affiliated with the Trades and Labour Council, 22 were in favour of the strike and 15 were against it. Despite the strong negative vote the Council officially promulgated the strike on the evening of June 2, to begin the following day.

The strike involved almost every branch of organized labour in the city, with the exception of public utilities. Waterfront activities were at a standstill and communications were partially paralyzed by the strike of street-car and telephone operators. Also on strike were metal trades unions, meat cutters, brewers, loggers, sugar refinery workers, and numerous smaller unions. Estimates of the number of workers involved ranged upwards from 12,000. 58/

As Masters describes the course of this event:

The strike assumed many of the characteristic features of its Winnipeg counterpart. Vancouver, like Winnipeg, had a strike committee which tried to avoid a collapse of society by keeping at work such essential employees as bakers, milk-wagon drivers, firemen, policemen, and hotel and restaurant employees. The anti-strike elements organized the Citizens' Law and Order League which was supported by Premier John Oliver. Mr. Oliver declared his belief that the agitation was led by men who were determined to overthrow the constitutional government of the country. The Citizens' League organized a jitney service which largely neutralized the effects of the street-car strike, much to the anger of the Trades and Labour Council, and published a newspaper, the Vancouver Citizen. 59/

The strike continued for a month without reaching any dramatic or violent crisis such as Winnipeg had experienced. On June 27th the Strike Committee recommended a return to work, following the end of the General Strike in Winnipeg, but the strikers at a mass meeting voted to prolong the

walkout until the strike leaders in Winnipeg were released. The Trades and Labour Council finally ended it by official vote on July 3, a week after the collapse of the Winnipeg Strike. 60/

A number of other strikes developed across the country at the same time as the Winnipeg walkout, or shortly after, in a wide variety of industries. These were largely over wages and other direct issues, and not in sympathy with the general strike.

Among the more important of these was an unauthorized strike of 6,266 coal miners in the eastern British Columbia—Alberta district, in protest against a reduction in daily pay incurred by a reduction of working hours from 9 to 8 per diem. The dispute lasted from May 24 to the end of August. It was complicated by the entrance of the One Big Union into the picture, and resulted in jurisdictional conflict with the UMWA. 61/

Other large strikes included one involving some 2,000 men in several building trades in Montreal, from September 2 to November 24, and one of 525 goldminers at Kirkland Lake, from June 12 to October 16. In both, the main demands concerned higher wages, shorter hours, and union recognition. 62/

All told, then, 1919 was a peak period of labour unrest, with numbers of strikes, workers involved and man-days lost far exceeding any previous year in Canada's history. And, in proportion to the country's total paid labour and to total union membership, it has never been reached since, even in 1946 or 1966. For the first time also, industries and trades in the "metals, machinery and conveyances" category accounted for the largest number of strikes—about twice those in construction—and for more than one-half the total man-days lost in all industries that year.

An almost equal number of strikes occurred during 1920, namely, 310 as against 322 the previous year. They were much smaller in size and shorter in duration, however, so that total workers involved and man days of employment lost were only a fraction of the previous year. From then on, except for a few prolonged shutdowns in coal mining, the incidence of strikes and lockouts continued on a downward trend until the mid-1930's. It marked the beginning of a long decline in the size, effectiveness and militancy of organized labour in Canada.

THE ONE BIG UNION

One notable development that arose out of, and contributed to, the unprecedented labour unrest of 1919-20 was the spectacular rise and fall of the One Big Union. This organization had been established, as described earlier, at the Western Labour Conference in Calgary during June 1919. The Winnipeg General Strike and its repercussions in other provinces contributed to its rapid growth in support, particularly in the western provinces. By the end of the year it claimed 101 affiliated local unions as well as important central labour councils in Vancouver, Victoria and other centres, and a reported membership of 41,150. The actual membership was probably larger than this at its peak, as many locals did not report their membership.

Its greatest strength was in British Columbia, with 29 locals and a membership of more than 19,000. This did not include the newly organized Lumber Workers' Industrial Union, which had some 8,000 members at the time of the Winnipeg strike, and 17,000 by the end of the year. Locals of this organization extended as far east as Sudbury, Ontario. Other important affiliates included District 6 of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers and, for a time, District 18 of the UMW in eastern British Columbia and western

Alberta. In Vancouver and other smaller towns it won the affiliation of metal workers, operating engineers, teamsters, carpenters and numerous other trades. 63/

The Lumber Workers' Industrial Union provided the most active and militant unit of the OBU after it was formed. Of 18 strikes reported in British Columbia after the general strike, 13 involved loggers. Prior to the war, as noted earlier, this was one important industrial group in British Columbia that had remained almost entirely unorganized. 64/

The OBU was fought by governments, employers and international unions alike. It was notable that most of the prominent OBU leaders were arrested during the Winnipeg strike, even those who had played no part in it, while none of the international union leaders, even those on the strike committee, were not arrested. Similarly in Vancouver. During the general strike in that city police raided the homes of many prominent unionists, seizing books, records and correspondence. The offices of several leftwing papers, such as the Federationist, the Camp Worker, the Red Flag and those of the Socialist Party were ransacked. All records of the British Columbia Federation of Labour were likewise seized. 65/

Opposition on the industrial scene was no less strong. The British Columbia Employers Association advised its members not to recognize OBU unions, and active blacklists were maintained against known socialists and OBU members. The TLC and its international union affiliates likewise launched a strong counter-attack. The charters of unions supporting or contributing money to the OBU were withdrawn. The charter of the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council was one of those lifted, and an AFL organizer was

sent in to establish a new council. 66/ In a number of trades closed shop, union shop, and check-off agreements were effective in "freezing out" the OBU, or forcing workers to cease their membership in the organization. In District 18, UMWA, the international office suspended the district charter and appointed a three-man trusteeship to replace the leaders who had defected to the OBU during the unauthorized strike of May to August, 1919.

In the face of these difficulties, about the only industries or occupations in which the OBU faced little or no competition from already entrenched unions were those previously unorganized, mainly the lumber workers and a number of unskilled groups. Unfortunately for the OBU, these groups were most vulnerable to the severe depression and unemployment which followed a year after the new organization had been established.

The demise of the OBU was further hastened by factionalism and splits within the organization. Within a few years most of its affiliates had forsaken it, and it eventually declined to the proportions of a small organization with a few hundred members based in Winnipeg.

The collapse of the Winnipeg General Strike, and of sympathetic strikes in numerous other cities, followed by the dramatic rise and fall of the One Big Union, seemed to "take the steam" out of the labour movement. There was an almost continuous decline in the size, strength, militancy and overall effectiveness of organized labour in Canada over the ensuing decade.

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CHAPTER IV

THE "TORPID TWENTIES": 1920-29

The 1920's, like the decade preceding World War I, is another period that is often looked back on with nostalgia by many middle-aged and older people today. The historians Charles and Mary Beard in their book, America in Midpassage, gave the introductory chapter, on the 1920's, the title of "The Golden Glow." The more popular name given to that period is "The Roaring Twenties."

As with the earlier era, but so different in many ways, it was a period of serious imbalances and maladjustments that did not fully come to light until the Great Depression that followed in the 1930's.

The main burden of these maladjustments fell on farmers and on unskilled and semi-skilled labour. And, counter to the history of organized labour up to then, the trade union movement in Canada and the United States alike, during a period of relatively rapid economic growth, declined in size, militancy and effectiveness. Irving Bernstein, in his monumental volume on the labour history of that period in the United States, has aptly titled it, The Lean Years. 1/

Bernstein's analyses of the main developments in the United States contributing to the decline and near paralysis of the labour movement probably apply, for the most part, to Canada as well. The trade union movement in this country during the 1920's, even more than in previous decades, was dominated by international affiliates of the AFL. These for the most part suffered the same process of attrition as did their parent bodies. A much larger segment of Canadian industry than before came under ownership or control by United States concerns, as there was a large increase in the investment of United States capital in this country. Canada generally became far more "Americanized" than before, economically and otherwise, and experienced many of the same types of processes and maladjustments as did the United States.

Specifically, Bernstein lists six major factors leading to the "paralysis of the labour movement " in the years following the immediate post-war upsurge.

First, and basic in his view, there was the heterogeneous labour force, and certain demographic trends on this continent, that weakened unions in all but the more protected or skilled trades. Among the more important of these was the huge migration of people from farming and farm labour into the cities in search of industrial employment. This more than compensated for the sharp curtailment of immigration to the United States. It flooded the main labour markets, particularly for the unskilled and semi-skilled, with conservative, individualistic types of workers, who were used to long hours at low pay and unfamiliar with, or even hostile to, unions.

Displacement from farming was, comparatively, not so severe in Canada as in the United States during the 1920's. Immigration, however, was much

larger, with about one and a half million entering the country. On the other hand, emigrants, largely to the United States, numbered more than a million. The large turnover these figures represent probably posed equally difficult organizational problems for unions in this country.

Second, the social climate and prevailing ideology of the times, with the idealization of "free enterprise" and competitive individualism, were favourable to employers and hostile to unions. Employers in many industries were able to take advantage of the situation to launch a widespread attack on unionism. A nation-wide campaign for the "open shop" was given the appealing title of the "American Plan." The adoption of company unions was only one of a panoply of anti-union tactics of the more belligerent kind, while a variety of policies classed under the term "welfare capitalism" had primarily the same objectives and similar effects.

While such employer philosophies and policies were not so highly publicized in Canada as in the United States, they appear to have been just as prevalent. This was to be expected in view of the rapid growth in ownership and control of Canadian industries and resources by United States business firms, and the growing influence of United States business philosophies and techniques in this country.

Third, the main paths of economic expansion during the 1920's were unfavourable to labour organization in both countries. Employers in the major new industries that emerged to prominence in the 1920's, notably automobiles, utilities, electrical products, chemicals and rubber, were strongly anti-union. And the rapid trend toward increasing concentration in such industries as steel, food products, automobiles, tobacco and glass was, without exception, favourable to corporations that were intensely hostile to the very principle of collective bargaining.

Much the same was true of other major growth industries in Canada during this period, such as metal mining, smelting and processing, logging and lumber production and, in some cases, pulp and paper. Some industries in which unions had been strongly entrenched, notably coal mining and textiles in certain regions, underwent a drastic decline in output and employment, or moved to new, unorganized areas to avoid having to deal with unions.

Fourth, while the Canadian and United States economies were on the upswing of the business cycle during most of the 1920's, the type and degree of expansion were not favourable to union growth. While the statistical measurement and tabulation of unemployment were exceedingly poor in both countries, some of the more serious estimates in the United States placed the unemployed as ranging as high as 12% to 13% of the labour force during the 1920's. 2/ This was largely due to an insufficient rate of growth. The noted Brookings Institution study, America's Capacity to Produce, estimated that the United States economy in the peak year, 1929, operated at only 80% of its capacity. An additional adverse factor was the rapid and widespread displacement of labour due to the unprecedented rate of technological change.

A further combination of circumstances operated against unions. Technological change was most pronounced in the predominantly unorganized mass production industries. Wages rose somewhat in those sectors, while the cost of living remained generally stable, a rare combination in prosperous times. It tended to generate complacency among large groups of workers who in other circumstances would have been amenable to unionization. In the aggregate, however, workers failed to share fully in the prosperity of the times. Between 1923 and 1929, according to Simon Kuznets, the dividend component of national income in the United States rose 64.1% while wages and salaries advanced only 20.6%. 3/

Fifth, and more characteristic of the United States than of Canada, was the hostility of the courts to organized labour. This was indicated particularly by their willingness to issue blanket injunctions against unions and to uphold the legality of the "yellow dog contract" and other anti-union practices.

Finally, what stood out was the obsolescence and ineffectiveness of the predominantly craft union structure of the AFL and, in Canada, the TLC. Technological change and mechanization diluted or transformed traditional skills and broke down numerous craft distinctions, but the main labour organizations were unable or unwilling to make structural adaptations to these changes. Furthermore, large new segments of the labour force, particularly in new growth industries such as automobiles, could not be accommodated within the existing craft union structure. Union leaders preferred to hold on to what they had, mainly in skilled building, printing and mechanical trades, local service industries, and railroads, rather than undertake any major campaign to organize the unorganized and less skilled majority. As Bernstein observes: "In the twenties union leaders seemed bereft of ideas to deal with this decline of their movement. They were ideological prisoners of the past." 4/

There was further weakening in Canada due to splits and secessions from the TLC, and the formation of rival labour federations, namely, the All Canadian Congress of Labour and, in Quebec, the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour.

One marked effect of these various trends that contributed to the weakening of unions was the notable decline in labour unrest and militancy, in its overt expressions at least. The incidence of strikes fell sharply in

both countries during the late 1920's. It declined to the lowest point since the turn of the century, with the exception of the first two years of World War I. "By 1929", Bernstein concludes, "the strike as an instrument of bargaining, to say nothing of social protest had fallen into almost total disuse." 5/

Coal Mining

One notable exception to the general decline in militancy and strike action among organized labour was that of coal mining. The fall in coal prices, and increased competition from other fuels, and in the United States, competition from non-unionized coal-producing areas, led to increasing pressure on the United Mine Workers of America to accept wage reductions. Resistance led to many long and bitter strikes and lockouts, to force and violence and to police or military intervention on an unprecedented scale. The UMW in the United States was virtually destroyed by the losses it sustained in a series of such struggles, and by losses in membership that reduced it to a small proportion of its former size. A generally similar situation developed in Canada.

With the general decline of labour militancy in other industries, therefore, coal mining loomed far larger than before in the total strike picture. During 1921-29, inclusive, this one industry, having less than 2% of the total paid labour force in Canada, accounted for 144, or 16.8% of the total 843 strikes, 49% of all workers participating in strikes and 52.5% of all man-days of employment lost from strikes. 6/

Nova Scotia

During the war and immediate post war years, as pointed out earlier, wages in Nova Scotia coal mining, as in the west, were adjusted upward periodically to meet higher living costs, and this had served to prevent any major conflicts in the industry. A special Royal Commission to investigate disputes in the coal industry in 1920 in its report recommended further wage increases on a varying scale, as well as modernization of equipment, improved housing and some other measures. Wages in the industry reached their peak level in 1921.

The British Empire Steel Corporation earlier had taken over the Dominion Coal, Nova Scotia Steel and Coal, and Acadia Coal companies and achieved a virtual monopoly of coal production in the Maritime region. In January 1922 it announced a 35% wage reduction, against the protests of the men. After two conciliation boards in turn had recommended modified wage cuts, and their recommendations had been rejected, a strike finally developed involving some 14,353 men for more than three weeks during August and September. 7/ During the strike maintenance men as well as other underground and surface workers went out and officials and office staff had to man the machinery temporarily to prevent damage. Local authorities requisitioned military forces from the federal government for the protection of property. Little if any violence or property damage had occurred, however. The strike was settled on a compromise basis in a new agreement to apply until 1924. 8/

Meanwhile, a new and more militant left-wing executive had come to power in District 26. At a convention in Truro a resolution was passed calling for affiliation with the Red International of Labour Unions, with

headquarters in Moscow. 9/ This action was never carried out as the UMW headquarters threatened District 26 with suspension of its charter.

One of the most turbulent strikes, or series of strikes, in Nova Scotia's history developed the following year, and was to have wide repercussions. All told some 13,000 workers were involved from June 28 until August 1, 1923. It began with a strike of 3,000 steel workers in the British Empire operations at Sydney, in a demand for higher wages, the 8-hour day, union recognition and check-off. Previously there had been a number of short protest strikes against alleged company discrimination against unionists, and other issues, and coal miners had also been involved. 10/ Searches in the homes and offices of prominent labour leaders by provincial police looking for evidence of "sedition," as had occurred in numerous western centres, also led to threats of a general strike in protest.

The main strike of steelworkers on June 28 soon launched a violent chain of events. According to the account in the Labour Gazette:

Within an hour, at 4 pm., the chief of police was called to deal with obstruction on the streets.

Certain disorders occurred that same night. Attempts were made to prevent workers in the boiler house and coke ovens from working. A crowd attacked one of the gates of the steel plant, but were driven off by the steel company police and city police. Masks were worn by some of the crowd, and that night and the day following, arrests were made for assault, intimidation, wearing of masks, etc. A magistrate reading the Riot Act was knocked unconscious by a stone. About midnight, the County Judge sent a requisition for troops to the Militia Officer commanding the district at Halifax. The first 250-man detachment reached Sydney at 4.00 A.M. June 30th, others following from time to time, until the middle of July, when the number reached 2,000.

On the second day of the strike, the County Sheriff and the Chief of Police of Sydney asked the Attorney General of the Province for provincial police and they arrived the next day.

Disorders and arrests occurred on the 29th and 30th, and the Riot Act was read on this latter date. The troops fired over the heads of the crowd to quell a disturbance. Similar disorders occurred from time to time. Police brutality was charged. 11/

The Trades and Labour Congress sent a protest to Parliament, demanding a Royal Commission investigation of this calling out of troops "upon the requisition of one man." 12/ The Prime Minister replied that the presence of so many troops in Cape Breton under the circumstances "renders it apparent that there is need for revision of the statute respecting the calling out of militia in aid of the civil power." The mine workers, to whom the militia was a familiar and unwelcome symbol of intimidation by government and by corporation, struck. J.B. McLachlan, left-wing President of District 26, published a circular letter saying, in part:

Against these brutes (provincial police and militia) the miners are on strike. Nova Scotia is the guilty and responsible party for this crime. No miner or mine worker can remain at work while this government turns Sydney into a jungle. To do so is to sink your manhood and allow Armstrong (Premier) and his miserable bunch of grafting politicians to trample your last shred of freedom in the sand. Call a meeting of your local at once and decide to spread the fight against Armstrong to every mine in Nova Scotia. Act at once....Tomorrow may be too late. 13/

Subsequently, on July 6, the President and Secretary of District 26 were arrested for "circulating false information as to the actions of the provincial police." 14/

The coal miners of the Dominion and Nova Scotia company operations, subsidiaries of British Empire Steel, struck on July 3, and company officials took the places of the maintenance men who walked out. From time to time loads of supplies and carloads of coal were held up by crowds of pickets, but were finally put through under police or military authority. A number of other mines were struck in the District during the next few days. There was even a sympathy strike in Drumheller, Alberta, and the President of District 18 of the UMW issued a call for a conference of labour organizations in Western Canada to consider possible action. The

UMW President, John L. Lewis, ordered District 18 to discontinue this course. 15/

The strike, or series of strikes, in Nova Scotia ran counter to the policy of the international union in two ways: it was in violation of contract, and it included maintenance men. The international executive of the UMW thereupon ordered the miners back to their jobs. The men resisted for several weeks and the strike did not finally end until August. Meanwhile, the charter of District 18 was revoked, all the officers were removed from office, and new provisional officers were appointed. 16/

The enforced peace was short lived. When the agreement terminated in January 1924, Besco announced a 20% wage reduction and a strike involving some 10,525 ensued. The men demanded a 20% increase to re-establish the 1921 scale. After about a month, the provisional officers signed an agreement for a small wage increase. This was rejected decisively by the men in a referendum but, as authority was still in the hands of the provisional officers, the strike was terminated.

Rank-and-file dissatisfaction led some locals to break away from the UMW and join the OBU. When new elections were held for the district, left-wing leaders again came to power, and new wage negotiations were conducted with the company.

In March 1925, after a winter of unusually slack employment, Besco precipitated another long and bitter conflict when, in addition to insisting upon a 10% wage cut, it terminated the miners' credit at company stores. A strike of some 11,500 men followed. 17/ As Eugene Forsey pointed out, the company's actions could be viewed as constituting a lockout. 18/

Bjarnason described the course of the strike as follows:

The suspension of work lasted for five months. The miners were enabled to hold out that long by virtue of aid from sources whose number indicates the extent of popular feeling. UMW headquarters contributed \$10,000 a week. The provincial government donated money through the Red Cross. The Great War Veterans Association organized a National Relief Committee. Money was raised by the Trades and Labour Congress, and some constituent organizations favored a general sympathy strike. The CNR provided free transportation of relief supplies to the strike area. For once, outside intervention favored the strikers.

In spite of requests by the company, troops were not requisitioned for some time. The company maintained armed guards to protect properties where they had been able to place maintenance men. These guards eventually clashed with pickets, one of whom was killed. Following this incident, provincial police were sent in — at the requisition of the same judge who ordered them in 1923 — and once again huge sums of money were spent aiding the employer. The estimated cost of occupation was \$325,000.

The combination of hunger and anger had indeed precipitated something approaching insurrection. Warehouses and stores were burned. It was estimated that \$300,000 worth of goods were looted from company stores. Buildings worth \$200,000 were destroyed and two mines were damaged by flooding.

Nevertheless, as time went on, the company grew more truculent. Now it demanded, as well as a reduction in pay, the establishment of a blacklist and the abolition of the check-off and of overtime rates. These terms amounted to an attempt to break the unions. 19/

The strike was finally settled on a compromise formula, through intervention by the provincial government. Unemployment and dependence on relief continued to be serious after the strike was settled. This precluded any further large shutdowns in Maritimes coal mining for several years. These conditions also led to the virtual disintegration and disappearance of District 26 of the UMW for almost a decade.

Alberta and Eastern British Columbia

The UMW's District 18 in eastern British Columbia and Alberta went through a similarly turbulent period of unrest and strikes during the

1920's. It was marked by the intensity of rival unionism, growing economic difficulties of the industry and consequent pressure for wage-cuts, resulting in disintegration of the UMW.

District 18, as noted earlier, had been one of the largest western union bodies to affiliate with the One Big Union. On May 24, 1919, while the previous year's agreement was still in force, a strike developed involving some 6,266 miners in the district in a demand for wage increases to compensate for a reduction of the working day from 9 hours to 8 hours daily, as effected by the Director of Coal Operations. 20/

The strike was not authorized by the UMW and was given no support by headquarters. Efforts to persuade the miners to return to work failed. In late July, after more than two months, the UMW's International Executive sent a Committee to the area to attempt a settlement. As a result of its investigation, the International revoked District 18's charter on the grounds that it was guilty of dual membership, having previously affiliated with the OBU. The incumbent district executives were fired and the district was reorganized. The men finally ended the strike and returned to work at the end of August, after being out for more than three months. The UMW was able to achieve this result, despite opposition from most of the men, by reason of its union shop and check-off agreement with the district coal operators' association, which enabled it to "freeze out" the OBU.

That the OBU had wide popular support in District 18 was indicated the following year. An estimated 3,500 coal mine employees went on strike from October 1 to 20th, 1920, demanding that the UMW's check-off be abolished and that a new agreement be negotiated with the OBU. The strike failed. 21/

Another long strike of five months duration involved more than 7,500 men in 1922, this time over a wage reduction proposed by the operators. After protracted conciliation hearings and proceedings under the IDIA, a settlement was finally reached on the basis of preserving the same relationship to the wage level in coal mining in the United States as had existed under the old agreement. (There was virtually an industry-wide shutdown at the same time in the United States). This arrangement was to precipitate further trouble.

In 1924, when the 1922 agreement was due to terminate, the coal operators demanded another wage reduction, by \$1.17 per diem, on the grounds that their markets were being destroyed by competition from non-union mines in Alberta and British Columbia, and from some union mines in the United States as well as Nova Scotia, with which the UMW had signed contracts carrying lower rates than in District 18. The union, rejecting these demands, went on strike on April 1, 1924, involving some 7,400 men for about seven months. The strike was finally settled again through intervention by the federal labour department, with a wage reduction only slightly less than that originally proposed by the operators. 22/

The legislature of Alberta, just prior to the strike had established a special Coal Commission to investigate labour conditions in the industry. Its findings were, in effect, that there were far too many miners in the industry to be supported adequately. Many were continuously unemployed, or working only part-time. A large part of the blame it put on wage rates that were considerably above those in farming or other industries in the province, with the consequence that excessive numbers of workers were attracted to coal mine work. 23/ Seen in this light, the stubborn attempt

by the union to prevent wage cuts during 1924 seemed ill-advised. This was borne out by the events that followed.

The 1924 agreement was subject to termination on six months' notice, and such notice was given by the operators on March 31, 1925. However, even before this, the Crowsnest Pass Company closed its mines, alleging inability to operate profitably at the wages agreed to. In these circumstances the miners, their morale weakened after the preceding six months' strike, and by the prospect of permanent unemployment and near-starvation, withdrew from the UMW, formed the British Columbia Miners' Association, and offered to work for less. 24/

This lockout technique spread to Alberta, where several mines were successful in negotiating agreements with their employees at wages considerably below the UMW scale. The UMW in June tried to save the situation by negotiating a new agreement with the mines they had left, involving a wage reduction comparable to that of the Crowsnest Pass Company. This generated opposition among some of the more militant locals, which withdrew to form a new union. In less than a year, UMW District 18 had lost more than four-fifths of its members.

The result was a complete breakdown of district-wide collective bargaining. The operators' association split up into regional associations and independent operators, while the men were now divided into many local unions. The UMW was put under international administration for the next eleven years.

Largest of the new unions to be formed out of the débacle was the Mine Workers' Union of Canada (MWUC), which in 1928 affiliated with the All

Canadian Congress of Labour. Over the next two years it was to establish or win over new locals on Vancouver Island and in Nova Scotia as well as Alberta. A strike of some 1,231 of its members from November 30 to December 23, 1925, in demanding a 50 cent per diem wage increase, was defeated, due, according to union spokesmen, to a threat of eviction by the employers. 25/

In March 1928, in an effort to consolidate its position, the MWUC requested Alberta operators to meet with it as a unit to negotiate a new agreement. The conciliation board appointed to deal with the dispute agreed with the operators, to the effect that the latter should deal with local units rather than with the district organization of the union. The union rejected this report and called a strike, involving some 1,200 men from August 13, 1928, to February 28, 1929. It resulted in agreements with all but two operators, who signed with the UMW. 26/

Vancouver Island

Labour relations in the Vancouver Island coal fields during the 1920's remained relatively quiescent as compared to Districts 18 and 26 of the UMW. The miners continued to be represented by committees of employees rather than by unions, a system in which the employer had overwhelmingly superior bargaining power.

During 1925 the operators, as elsewhere on the continent, announced wage reductions in the face of declining demand and prices for coal. This led to but one small, brief and ineffectual strike among miners in the Nanaimo area. 27/

Later, the Mine Workers Union of Canada organized District 2 on the Island, with locals established in five main coal communities.

Other Industries

Strikes in industries other than coal mining, after 1920, as noted earlier, were generally fewer, smaller in size and of shorter duration than had been the case in most earlier years. It was primarily due to the weakening and loss of membership among unions during the severe depression and unemployment of the early 1920's, and their inability to share effectively in the general economic recovery and expansion later in the decade. It is significant, for instance, that in the Labour Gazette's summary of strikes and lockouts in 1921, of the 132 causes listed for all the strikes and lockouts for which there were adequate records, no fewer than 87 occurred to resist wage reductions; and of the 126 strikes the results of which were definitely known, 69, or well over one-half, were settled clearly in favour of the employers. 28/ The comparable results for 1922 were 41 out of 81, and 35 out of 70, respectively. 29/ Two of the largest strikes in this category involved 2,000 pulp and paper mill workers in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, from May 11 to July 4, 1921 30/; and 1,400 workers in more than ten trades in a "general strike" that tied up building construction in Ottawa from May 2 to July 13, 1921. 31/ Both strikes were to resist attempted wage reductions. From then until the end of the decade, most strikes were for wage increases and recognition and, while relatively few and small, a higher proportion ended favourably for the unions involved.

The most prolonged strike, or series of strikes, in any industry in the 1920's, even coal mining, occurred among the printing trades, lasting from May 2, 1921 to August 30, 1924. It involved printers', compositors' and photo engravers' locals across Canada, from Vancouver to Halifax, and including Montreal, Quebec, Hamilton, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Calgary, Saskatoon,

and other smaller centers. The main issue was a more-or-less concerted attempt to achieve the 44-hour week together with, in some localities, wage increases and additional benefits. 32/

Of industries other than coal mining, building construction generally accounted for by far the largest number of strikes year by year, though most of these were small and of limited duration. The 1920's was a period of comparatively rapid expansion that generated a major boom in construction. The building trades comprised the best organized sector of the labour movement. They represented one of the few groups of unions that increased in size and bargaining effectiveness during the decade, and were able to win sizeable gains in wages, union security and other benefits.

The largest strikes of the 1920's, in industries other than coal mining, occurred among boot-and-shoe factory workers, and clothing workers, in the province of Quebec.

The strike in the boot-and-shoe industry in Quebec City had a definite continuity with the disputes at the turn of the century that were described earlier. It involved 2,000 to 3,000 employees on-and-off for almost a year. In November 1925, some 2,100 boot-and-shoe workers went on strike against a wage reduction of 20% and new working rules. The Administrator of the Archdiocese of Quebec finally persuaded strikers to return to work pending arbitration of the dispute, under the system that had been in force in the industry since 1900-01. On April 27, 1926, the Arbitration Board finally submitted decisions calling for wage reductions of 15 to 20%. The National Catholic Union representing the workers accepted the award, but it was rejected by a number of members.

A new strike developed in May, involving some 3,000 workers in the industry. The boot-and-shoe manufacturers association then announced an open-shop policy and refused to negotiate with the union unless the arbitration award was accepted and the strikers returned to their jobs. This policy apparently generated violence. Strikers attacked some non-union workers recruited by the employers; police were posted at factory gates to protect plants and strike-breakers; several riots occurred; further police were dispatched to the scene; and more strikers were arrested on charges of intimidation of non-strikers and interference with or obstruction of police. Following these disturbances, the manufacturers' association announced that it would have no further dealings with the National Catholic and proceeded to advertise for, and train, replacements for the strikers. Further riots and arrests occurred over the next two months until the strikers finally capitulated. 33/

The strike in the clothing industry in Montreal involved as many as 5,000 workers at its peak and dragged on intermittently from July 1926 to April 1927. It developed out of an effort by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers to achieve conformity to union wages and working conditions in the industry, and both union and non-union shops were involved. Within a few days workers in the unionized plants returned and a number of hitherto non-union employers signed agreements with the union. The strike continued against a few large non-union firms and a large number of contractors. Picketing conducted against these enterprises led to several disturbances and resulted in the arrest of a number of strikers charged with intimidation and assault. Later an injunction was issued against the union picketing these firms. The union was also sued for damages allegedly resulting from the strike. By the end of the year, only 40 workers remained on strike. 34/

One other strike of considerable importance, particularly in view of later events in the 1930's, was one involving 1,400 longshoremen in Vancouver, B.C. from October 8 to December 8, 1923. 35/ It was interpreted in labour circles as resulting from the anti-union drive emanating from the United States. A resolution introduced to the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council stated that the employers' action was "part of a concerted design of the American Capitalist class to wipe out all semblance of working class organization and to establish their ambition in industrial life - the open shop." 36/

The Vancouver local of the International Longshoremen's Association had, in October 1923, submitted demands for 90 cents an hour (which was already being paid in Prince Rupert), time and a half for overtime, and a bonus for dangerous work. The Shipping Federation summarily dismissed these demands and, in refusing to even consider serious negotiations, led the union to believe that the employers were out to destroy their organization. When the strike began, it was evident that the Shipping Federation, with strong backing from the CPR, was well-prepared. Strike-breakers were imported and housed in the CPR ship, the ~~Empress~~ Empress of Japan. There were 350 men armed with shotguns, and an armed launch, in the companies' employ. The Shipping Federation set up its own hiring halls to replace the men on strike. 37/ Efforts to involve the provincial and federal departments of labour in conciliation proved of no avail as the companies remained intransigent and their Federation announced that they would "make no peace" with the union.

After two months the union was broken everywhere except in Victoria. During the strike the employers had organized a "company union" among the

strike-breakers, called the Vancouver and District Waterfront Workers' Association. 38/

Ironically, this organization was subsequently to come under control of Communist organizers and to involve the Vancouver waterfront in a far more prolonged, violent and costly strike-lockout than in 1923.

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CHAPTER V

THE "DIRTY THIRTIES": 1930-1939

The general decline in membership, bargaining power and militancy of the established trade union movement during the 1920's led to its virtual disintegration during the worst years of the depression that followed. A number of the larger industrial-type unions in the United States and Canada, such as in coal mining, textiles and clothing, had been badly decimated during the 1920's and almost disappeared during the early 1930's. The United Mine Workers, which claimed almost a half million members during the early 1920's, had hardly more than 25,000 in good standing by 1932. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers, which had 177,000 members in 1920, received per capita payments from only 7,000 in 1932. The organizations that suffered the sharpest drop during the depression itself, however, were those that had maintained or increased their strength during the 1920's. The building trades, most vulnerable to the vagaries of the business cycle, suffered a drop in membership of more than one-third in the brief period 1929-33. 1/

Contrary to the traditional pattern of previous decades, the general incidence of strikes increased during the early years of the depressed 1930's, as compared to the more prosperous 1920's. To a far greater extent than previously, however, these were "desperation" strikes by workers seeking

to resist wage cuts and other losses imposed on them by employers during the major period of economic decline. And the more important of these were organized and led by new left-wing unions that had been formed in opposition to the established labour movement.

The decade of the 1930's could generally be classed as one of severe depression, in so far as the gross national product, per capita incomes and prices generally in the United States, Canada and most industrially developed countries remained below the peak levels of the later 1920's, while unemployment remained far higher. For purposes of analysis in this historical survey, however, it would seem appropriate to take the year 1935 as a dividing line between two fairly distinct sets of circumstances, in terms of several criteria.

During the first period, 1930-35, there was continual economic decline from the previous high point of 1929 to the low point of the depression, in 1932-33. This was followed by limited recovery during 1934, spurred in large part by the National Recovery Act (NRA) and various "New Deal" measures of the newly-elected Roosevelt administration in the United States. During this period also, the Communist Party, which had followed a "boring from within" policy towards established unions during the 1920's, launched an ambitious campaign of agitation and direct action, and the organization of new, "revolutionary" organizations among workers, farmers and other groups, in direct opposition to established trade unions and farm organizations. In the United States, the new Communist labour federation was the Trade Union Unity League (TUUL) and in Canada, the Workers' Unity League (WUL). Their main efforts were directed towards organizing workers in those industries in which the AFL in the United States, and the TLC and ACCL in Canada, had

left unorganized, or in which their previously established organizations had disappeared, in many cases after serious defeats at the hands of employers. Outstanding among these were: logging and sawmilling; coal and metal mining; textile manufacturing; shipping; and, in British Columbia, longshoring and fishing. The major strikes during the early 1930's were nearly all in these industries and, in most cases, under Communist union leadership. In contrast to previous decades, strikes in building construction were very few, as well as generally small in size and of brief duration.

The peak year of industrial conflict during this period, as measured by strikes and lockouts, was 1934. It was stimulated in the United States in large part by the temporary revival of union activity generally, under encouragement offered by Section 7a of the National Recovery Act. In Canada it would appear to have been, in large part, a result of "demonstration effect" arising out of the great publicity surrounding the NRA, coupled with dissatisfaction over the inadequate measures being undertaken in this country, as compared to the United States, in attempting to bring economic recovery.

A more important expression of unrest and conflict in some respects, and certainly more dramatic and violent than in the industrial sector proper, was the ambitious campaign, again mainly under Communist leadership, to organize the unemployed in the main cities and towns. The participation of unemployed groups in demonstrations and riots brought civil disturbance generally to a new high and provoked the most widespread, severe, and in many cases brutal measures of repression by police forces since the Winnipeg General Strike. The climax was reached during 1935 in the relief camp strike in British Columbia and the attempted "On-to-Ottawa Trek" that culminated in the violent and bloody "Regina riot".

One extremely important feature of this period was the revival of Section 98 of the Criminal Code, which had been enacted late in World War I to deal with "seditious", "subversive" and "Communitistic" influences and activities. As announced by the Prime Minister of Canada, the Honourable R.B. Bennett, shortly after his election in 1930, Communism was to be stamped out by "the iron heel of ruthlessness". Under the provisions of this statute, prominent Communists were imprisoned and others, suspected of subversive activities, were deported, while an unlimited degree of force was sanctioned against organizations actually or supposedly dominated by Communists.

In brief, the early years of the Great Depression generated in government and other circles fear bordering on hysteria regarding the dangers of Communist subversion and revolution. There was a consequent tendency to react by resorting to extreme measures of suppression. It was a period similar, in some respects, to the years immediately following World War I.

The second half of the decade featured a dramatic turn of events in the labour movement. It was sparked by two major developments in the United States, namely: first, passage of the National Labor Relations Act (or Wagner Act), which for the first time provided legal guarantees of labour's right to organize, prohibited employers from using various anti-union tactics, and required them to bargain in good faith with properly representative organizations of their employees; and second, the formation of the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO), which later became the Congress of Industrial Organizations after its affiliates were expelled from the AFL. It carried out a dramatically successful campaign to unionize hitherto unorganized workers in the main primary and mass production industries. By

the end of the 1930's trade union membership in the United States had more than doubled and was far above the previous peak of 1920-21 in size and, even more, in effectiveness. The Communist Party in the United States and in Canada abandoned its campaign of separate revolutionary unionism and reverted to "boring from within" the new and the already established organizations.

Again there was a pronounced "demonstration effect" of the United States on Canada, despite the lack of favourable legislation comparable to the Wagner Act, or of any attempt to establish an effective recovery and re-employment program comparable to the "New Deal." Union membership grew rapidly in Canada, though at no such pace as in the United States. In both countries strikes reached a new peak in 1937, exceeded only in 1919, coinciding with the peak of recovery from the low point of the depression. Then they declined sharply during the brief but severe depression of 1938 and the limited recovery of 1939.

In Canada, also, there was a new split and re-alignment in the labour movement. The Canadian branches of CIO unions were expelled from the TLC in 1938, and subsequently joined with the All Canadian Congress of Labour to form the new Canadian Congress of Labour.

Also accompanying these developments was a revival and growth in size and militancy of the Canadian and Catholic Confederation in Quebec. And in the later 1930's, for the first time since the turn of the century, Ontario, relative to its importance as the "hub" of industry in this country, became a major centre of conflict.

THE EARLY THIRTIES: 1930-35

Coal Mining

The coal mining industry in Canada during the 1930's, as in previous decades, continued to experience a disproportionate share of labour unrest, but was overshadowed in some respects by other industries. It accounted for 16.5% of all strikes during 1930-35, and 19.4% during 1936-39—a considerably larger proportion during the 1930's as a whole than in previous decades. Most of these, however, were relatively small and of short duration, so that they accounted for much smaller proportions of all workers involved and of man-days lost than in earlier periods. This was due largely to the drastic decline in strength and effectiveness of the United Mine Workers, competition and rivalry from new organizations, and the breakdown of district-wide bargaining. There were no large and protracted strikes covering entire mining regions, as had occurred in the 1920's and earlier.

Alberta-Eastern British Columbia

In Alberta and eastern British Columbia, as described earlier, the Mine Workers Union of Canada became the dominant union after 1925, but continued to experience the same difficulties as the UMWA and was unable to revive district-wide bargaining. By 1930, dissatisfaction on the part of the more militant miners in the area led to a movement for recall of the officers of the MWUC and for affiliation with the Communist-organized Workers' Unity League. This affiliation took place in May 1931. The announced program of the WUL was

...to unite the miners of all camps into the Mine Workers Union of Canada on the basis of struggle against the operators, to smash the United Mine Workers and to smash the leadership of

the MWUC, to transform the MWUC into a militant union fighting for the miners' locals of the MWUC. 2/

As would be expected, this campaign led to numerous strikes, including several involving extreme violence. The coal mines in the western area had been operating under the same wage scale from 1925 to 1932, and in the depressed conditions of the times there was new pressure for wage reductions. The miners in the region were about equally divided between the UMWA and the MWUC. The UMWA, after intervention of a conciliation board, accepted a wage cut of $12\frac{1}{2}\%$. The MWUC resisted and carried out a series of strikes in various mine operations. A few were successful, but the majority failed, and wage reductions were carried out.

A more frequent issue in strikes in the western region was that of recognition of the MWUC, that is, the refusal of employers to deal with that organization. One of the most bitter and highly publicized of these occurred in Bienfait, Saskatchewan, in 1931. As Bjarnason describes the conflict:

The companies flatly refused to meet with the union, and when a strike resulted, they attempted to deal with the situation by importing large numbers of strike breakers. The effort to work the mines with strike breakers was defeated by mass picketing, following which the operators applied for police protection.

.....

A Royal Commission was appointed and scheduled its first meeting for September 30th. On September 29th the union staged a parade to nearby Estevan, to demonstrate the unity of the miners. The parade was met on the highway by a detachment of R.C.M.P. and the fire brigade, who attempted to stop the marchers, at first with fire hose, then with bullets. Three strikers were killed by the police. The police do not seem to have been reprimanded or punished for killing unarmed strikers. On the other hand, twenty-two strikers were arrested and several served jail terms for their part in the parade. 3/

A similar pattern developed in a coal miners' strike in Corbin, British Columbia in 1935. The strike proceeded peacefully and without notable

incidents for three months until, on April 15, a tentative settlement was reached between the MWUC and the local management. Tom Uphill, local member of the provincial legislature, helped the parties in the negotiations. The following day the settlement was vetoed by wire from the mine owners in Spokane, Washington, and the following day an effort was made to re-open the mine with strike-breakers.

The miners and their wives, 250 in all, paraded to the mine, where they were met by a large detachment of police and strike-breakers on a narrow ledge from which there was no escape. When the women formed themselves into a picket line, the police drove a bulldozer into the gathering, breaking the limbs of several women. Further violence ensued, in which it was reported that 16 policemen and 25 strikers were injured. Seventeen strikers, including the president and secretary of the union, were arrested. 4/

In general, the record of the years 1930 to 1935 in coal mining is a monotonous recital of dozens of strikes and arrests in the hundreds. Strikers were arrested, not just for violence, but for such minor reasons as "violation of the I.D.I. Act" (i.e., going on strike without first applying for conciliation). In many cases, the purposes of the arrests were revealed by the withdrawal of charges as soon as the strikes were ended. 5/

Vancouver Island

The Vancouver Island coal fields, which had also become organized by the MWUC, had two important strikes during this period. Late in 1934 the miners at Cumberland struck for three weeks and obtained an agreement providing for some improvements. But, as had been customary in this area for over two decades under the arrangement worked out by W.L. MacKenzie King

prior to World War I, the agreement was signed with a committee of employees, not with the union. Within a few months the company, Canadian Collieries, instituted a layoff, all of the laid-off men being union members, including the entire grievance committee. In August 1935 the union struck, demanding that the laid off men be returned to work on a system of job rotation. The issue was submitted to a conciliation board which found against the union.

An interesting feature of the conciliation board report, which denounced the MWUC for "Communist agitation", was the statement that

...the existing agreement above referred to is the best possible evidence of the Company's approval of the system of collective bargaining. The Employer has approved of collective bargaining for many years, willingly accepting the principle and dealing with its employees through written agreements and a committee representing the employees. 6/

The company referred to had then been in existence for 66 years without ever having recognized or dealt with a union and, as noted, had just previously laid off the entire grievance committee.

Maritimes

The decline of the UMW and the rise of new, rival, radical unions developed in the Nova Scotia mine fields, as in western Canada. A few locals of the UMW defected to the MWUC in the late 1920's and early 1930's. A major revolt against the UMW developed in 1932, when the district organization accepted a Royal Commission recommendation for a 10% wage cut and the permanent closing of some less efficient mines employing about 2,000 men.

Out of this developed a rival organization, The Amalgamated Mine Workers of Nova Scotia. By the end of the year it had won over about one-half

of the union locals and membership in the industry. The main driving force of the new organization were members of the Communist Workers' Unity League, and their announced objectives in the Maritimes were similar to those expressed by the new leadership of the MWUC in Alberta and British Columbia, as described above. Drastic wage reductions attempted by the main mining companies led to a series of strikes, some lasting up to two months. 7/

Where in western Canada coal mines' recognition of the MWUC was the major issue provoking strikes, in addition to that of wage cuts, in the Nova Scotia coal mines the major issue was that of job rotation. In a period of general unemployment and relief on a meagre, less-than-subsistence level, there was strong resistance to mine closures and complete layoffs and a strong sentiment for "sharing the work." A strike over this issue occurred in New Waterford, Nova Scotia in 1931, and in 1932 it was the subject of strikes in River Hebert, Sydney Mines and Bras d'Or, Nova Scotia. The same issue cropped up repeatedly in strikes in subsequent years. Occasionally the unions succeeded in establishing a rotation system to divide the available work among their members, while at other times the employers were successful in dismissing the superfluous part of the work force. 8/

General

With the establishment of the CIO in 1935, under the leadership of John L. Lewis, unity was finally re-established in the ranks of unionism in the coal mines. The Communist Party abandoned separate revolutionary unionism and disbanded the TUUL in the United States and the WUL in Canada in 1935. The MWUC locals in Alberta and British Columbia reaffiliated with the UMWA that year, the "international administration" of District 18 was

lifted, and autonomy was restored. In Nova Scotia, a similar merger of the Amalgamated Mine Workers with District 26 of the UMW was not completed until 1938.

Other Industries

Coal mining during the early 1930's accounted for the largest number of disputes and for the most violent conflicts. The largest strikes in this period, however, accounting in the aggregate for the largest losses in man-days of employment, occurred in other industries, most notably in clothing manufacture in Quebec and Ontario, and in logging and sawmilling in British Columbia, and to a lesser extent Ontario. The most protracted and violent strike was that of longshoremen in Vancouver in 1935. During the peak strike year of 1934, eight strikes of clothing workers, in Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg, accounted for one-third of the total time lost, and one strike of loggers on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, accounted for another one-third. 9/ Among other important strikes in the early 1930's were those of fishermen in British Columbia and of metal miners in Manitoba.

The strikes in the clothing industry were motivated largely by attempts on the part of the two main unions, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the International Ladies' Garment Workers, to protect, or revive, union standards of wages, hours and working conditions. There had been serious erosion of collective bargaining brought on by fierce competition and price-cutting among employers and, in Quebec, the position of the ACWU and ILCWU had been undermined by competition for membership and employer recognition from the rival Catholic unions in that province. Strikes in the other industries mentioned, in logging and sawmilling, metal mining and fishing, and in longshoring in Vancouver, were largely the result of the aggressive

organizing campaign and bargaining tactics of the Workers' Unity League, face-to-face with intransigent opposition from employers supported by governments largely sympathetic to their case. The record in a large proportion of these strikes was one of alleged intimidation and violence, liberal use of police forces, arrests and, occasionally, deportation.

Clothing

Kerr and Siegel in their inter-industry comparison of strike activity, as described in an earlier chapter, had found the clothing industry to be one of the least strike-prone in most countries, including the United States. In Canada during the early 1930's, however, it had a higher incidence of strikes than any other industry besides coal mining, as measured particularly by workers involved and time loss. The larger strikes, in particular, were motivated by the effort of established unions to maintain their bargaining status in the main urban centres, and to prevent deterioration of union wage and hour standards during the depression. A brief strike of 1,800 clothing workers in Toronto during January 28 to February 10, 1930, for instance, included demands for a minimum wage in the industry, elimination of "sweat shops," a 44-hour week and time-and-a-half for overtime work. An agreement between the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) and the Toronto Cloak Manufacturers Protective Association, which provided for most of the above demands, had applied from January 1925 to January 1928. The agreement had lapsed since then. Most of the factories had been operating under non-union conditions and had refused to negotiate with the union for a new agreement. The strike ended, with the mediation of the Mayor and Board of Control of the City of Toronto, and a new agreement was signed incorporating most of the union's demands. 10/

That this agreement failed to stabilize the situation became evident a year later when a second strike was launched by the IIGWU involving some 1,500 employees from February 25 to May 7, 1931, and largely for the same demands, notably the 44-hour week and time-and-a-half for overtime. Efforts to settle the strike through mediation repeatedly failed due to refusal by a large minority of employers to recognize the union. Picketing was applied to these, and numerous arrests were made for alleged disorderly conduct, assault, intimidation, and the like. The strike finally ended with an estimated 60% of the employers signing agreements with the union. 11/

Two large strikes of men's clothing workers occurred in Montreal in 1932 and 1934. The first, involving 3,000 employees from August 1 to August 18, arose out of the attempt by a new union, the allegedly Communist-organized United Clothing Workers of Canada, to wrest jurisdiction from the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. The strike ended when the new organization claimed to have won new agreements with most of the employers in the Montreal Clothing Association. 12/

This victory, if such it was, proved to be short-lived. The second major strike, in 1934, involving 4,000 workers led by the ACW, was successful in winning a new agreement in the industry, providing for, among other gains, a 10% wage increase. 13/

A strike of women's clothing workers in Montreal the same year involved some 3,000 employees from August 22 to September 26, demanding higher wages, reduced hours, and improved working conditions. The strike was partially successful, in so far as a majority of employers signed agreements with the union providing for some improvements. 14/

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Primary Industries

Another major centre of strike activity during the 1930's, as noted earlier, were primary industries (in addition to coal), particularly logging and pulp cutting, fishing (in British Columbia), and metal mining in Manitoba. Most of the strikes arose out of the organizational efforts of the Workers' Unity League (WUL) and its various affiliates. All of the major strikes in these industries, without exception, and numerous minor strikes as well, were accompanied by some violence and/or property damage, arrests and the use of force by public authorities.

A strike of 650 sawmill workers at the Fraser Mills in New Westminster, British Columbia, during September 17 to November 23, 1931, for instance, involved the standard demands for a 10% wage increase, after earlier wage cuts, time-and-a-half for overtime, and recognition of the WUL Lumber and Agricultural Workers' Industrial Union. Early in the course of the strike a number of union pickets were arrested for "disorderly conduct", and charged with being members of an "unlawful assembly", and some with assaulting police officers. Later, midway through the strike, the arrival of long-shoremen to load a boat at the mill wharf led to a clash between pickets and police in which a dozen persons were injured. 15/

A strike of pulpwood cutters at Thunder Bay, Ontario, during November 1 to December 18, 1933 involved 1,500 workers directly and an additional 700 indirectly. They struck for recognition of the Lumber Workers' Industrial Union as well as other demands. Numerous strikers were arrested on charges of assault, unlawful assembly and riding on trains without paying fares. (The latter was a widespread practice during the depression and usually ignored by authorities.) A number of strikers were tried and sentenced and

several were subsequently deported. 16/ Another strike of 900 pulpwood cutters occurred the following year at Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, from October 3 to November 14, 1924, for much the same demands, including recognition of LWIU camp committees. Some pickets were arrested for "intimidation". 17/ A strike of 2,100 loggers at Nipigon, Ontario, for higher wages and improved camp conditions during June 19 to July 18, 1935 brought the arrest of three pickets for "obstruction". 18/

The largest strike of loggers, in terms of man-days lost, involved an estimated 2,300 workers on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, during January 27 to May 7, 1934, in demands for wage increases and other gains, as well as union recognition of the WUL-LWIU. While there were no official reports of violence, damage or arrests 19/, numerous cases of individual violence are known to have occurred. 20/

British Columbia was also the scene of a revival of unionism and strike activity in the fishing industry, under the organizational auspices of the WUL's Fishermen and Cannery Workers Industrial Union. A strike of some 1,800 fishermen in the Skeena and Nass Rivers as well as Rivers Inlet, in northern British Columbia, lasted from June 20 to July 11, 1932. 21/ While unreported in official sources, a number of union members were arrested on charges of intimidation and property damage. 22/ Another strike of some 2,500 salmon fishermen in Rivers Inlet during July 5 to July 31, 1936 ended when 100 fishermen resumed operations under the special protection of armed provincial police in a small fleet of patrol boats. 23/

One of the most turbulent strikes in primary industries other than coal, during the early 1930's, was one of 1,070 metal miners in Flin Flon, Manitoba, during June 11 to July 14, 1934. Their demands were the familiar

ones of a cancellation of a previous wage reduction, the 8-hour day, recognition of their union, the Mine Workers' Industrial Union of the WUL, and other minor concessions. On June 30, after three weeks, a mass meeting was held to vote on continuing or ending the strike. Trouble between opposing factions led to a serious disturbance, which ended only with the Mayor reading the Riot Act and large numbers of police being used to restore order. A number of arrests were made subsequently, on charges of unlawful assembly, interference with police, and assault. 24/

Longshoremen in Vancouver, 1935

The most bitter, protracted and violent industrial strike of the early 1930's was one involving some 2,375 longshoremen directly, plus hundreds of other workers in sympathy strikes, in Vancouver and other Pacific coast ports during June 5 to December 9, 1935. This conflict was the culmination of a number of incidents building up over a period of several months.

The Workers' Unity League, after an aggressive organizing drive during 1934, had formed an affiliate of seamen, the Seafarers' Industrial Union (SIU). On the waterfront, it had taken over control of the Vancouver and District Waterfront Workers' Association from the men who had led it since its inception as a "company" union during the longshoremen's strike of 1923 in Vancouver. In April 1934 a conference in Vancouver of the seafarers' union and of longshoremen's local organizations from Vancouver, New Westminster, Victoria and Seattle led to the formation of a new organization, the Longshoremen and Water Transport Workers of Canada. This organization attracted support from the International Longshoremen's Association on the Pacific Coast, which had been greatly revived and strengthened during the

aggressive organizing campaign of 1934 under the leadership of Harry Bridges in San Francisco.

Early in 1935 there were a number of small strikes on the Vancouver waterfront. One in March and April of grain loaders and export logworkers was successful in winning union recognition and wage increases. On April 25 the whole waterfront was struck for one hour in support of the strike of single unemployed who had left relief camps in British Columbia to stage a protest demonstration in Vancouver. On May 1 the longshoremen called a 24-hour "holiday" to join a 15,000-strong May Day parade. Late in May both the Seafarers and the Longshoremen won wage increases and union recognition on a coast-wide basis after a brief strike.

The incident that set off the general maritime strike was a dispute at Powell River, about 100 miles northwest of Vancouver, which began on May 17. The union was only briefly organized when it presented demands for wage increases and union recognition. The Powell River Pulp and Paper Co. replied with a lockout, and the men set up picket lines. Two weeks later the picket lines were attacked by provincial police and two strikers were injured. 25/ When longshoremen in other ports refused to handle "hot" Powell River paper, the strike-lockout spread to virtually all major ports on the British Columbia coast and into the United States.

The Shipping Federation of British Columbia retaliated by cancelling its agreement with the longshoremen's union, which was to have applied from November 1934 to October 31, 1937, and set up its own company union, the Canadian Waterfront Workers' Association. As in the strike of 1923, strike-breakers were boarded and lodged on the docks behind a high wire fence and

dozens of armed guards were hired to protect the main entrances. A private vigilante-type group called the "Citizens League" was organized and recruited members for military training on the docks, under the supervision of Colonel Edgett, a military officer of World War I and former Chief of Police in Vancouver.

During the six-months' strike there were numerous clashes of pickets with police, dozens of arrests were made, and there were numerous individual armed assaults on "scabs". The major disturbance occurred on June 18, an event that the Vancouver Province called "the bloodiest hours in our waterfront history".

It had been reported that RCMP forces were guarding the docks with machine guns. The president of the longshoremen's union, Ivan Emery, in threatening to use force in sending a delegation to the docks, was quoted as saying:

We have heard the rattle of machine guns (in World War I). I believe we have enough ex-servicemen on the waterfront who are prepared to listen to them again. 26/

One thousand longshoremen, led by a World War veteran who had been awarded the Victoria Cross, on June 18 marched on the Ballantyne Pier, major loading dock on the waterfront, where they were met by a large force of RCMP.

The Vancouver Sun of June 18 described subsequent developments as follows:

Tear gas bombs were fired by RCMP over the heads of the crowd, mounted city and provincial police charged them at full gallop, and foot police swung into action with batons this afternoon when thousands of longshore strikers and sympathizers tried to break through the guard and march on Ballantyne pier.

It was 1.20 p.m. when through a crowd of at least 5,000 longshoremen and sympathizers, and interested onlookers, a big

body of men marched down Wheatley Avenue. They were singing old army songs. At their head a leader marched waving an unfurled Union Jack.

The vast crowd was hushed as the marchers crossed the road fronting Ballantyne Pier and continued down to the railroad tracks. Three RCMP men on foot attempted to stem the tide of the determined marchers. They would not retreat.

Without parley the marchers overwalked the three RCMP men, two of them were thrown to the ground.

That brought the main charge of mounted and foot police, followed by sporadic fighting and rioting. Twenty-eight persons were known casualties of the main police attack and one bystander was reported shot by the police. 27/ Twenty-four others were arrested on the spot, including the above-quoted union president, for "incitement to riot". 28/ The charges levelled against the others included, in addition, rioting, assault, damaging property, and carrying offensive weapons.

In succeeding weeks the strike spread to other ports, and other maritime groups, including seamen and shipyard workers. Longshoremen in locals as far south as San Francisco refused to handle "hot" cargo from Vancouver. Several ship crews from the United States struck in sympathy in Vancouver, were fired and returned to the United States. Members of the crew of a New Zealand steamer who refused to handle the vessel for unloading, and who left the ship, were arrested for desertion.

In October, Mr. Justice Doms of the Ontario Supreme Court, who had been appointed by the federal government to investigate the dispute, in his report exonerated the companies and blamed the waterfront troubles entirely on left-wing unionism. 29/

Unemployed Organizations and the Regina Riot

A more significant manifestation of labour unrest than strikes of organized employed workers, as described above, and certainly encompassing more mass violence and legal suppression by force, were the activities of organizations of unemployed, mainly under the auspices of the Workers' Unity League. A dramatic culmination was reached in the Regina Riot of Dominion Day, 1935. 30/

A question arises at this point as to whether an analysis of protest demonstrations and strikes among unemployed and relief recipients during the Depression Thirties properly belongs in an historical survey of "labour unrest" and "industrial conflict" in Canada. Its inclusion seems justified on several grounds. In general, widespread agitation and unrest among the unemployed logically have to be interpreted from the perspective of the "normal" work situation, actual or anticipated, of the people involved. The frustration and dissatisfaction of the unemployed during the 1930's, in other words, arose primarily from the unfavourable contrast of their prevailing condition of idleness, dependency and deprivation with the standard of living that they had once experienced, or at least had come to expect, from employment at prevailing rates of pay (though during the worst years of the Depression wage earnings in many lines of work provided no better level of living than did relief).

This perspective seems particularly pertinent in analyzing the controversial program that provided the central issue underlying the dramatic and violent events of 1935, namely, the system of work relief camps that was established by the federal government under military administration.

In this experiment the government used unemployed men, who were paid "relief" in lieu of wages, to undertake various construction projects that would ordinarily have utilized legitimate wage earners and private contractors. In this type of situation there seemed lacking any meaningful distinction between "labour" and "unemployed" and their respective categories of unrest, and between "industrial" and "social" conflict. Furthermore, the individuals and groups that were most active in organizing mass protest and conflict, among employed and unemployed alike, were largely affiliated to the same central body, the Workers' Unity League. Certainly from the viewpoint of organization and strategy, the problems of the two were deemed to be closely interrelated and, indeed, inseparable.

Conditions in Canada during the early 1930's furnished a ready-made justification for agitation, mass protest and violence. Canada was particularly hard hit during the depression, because of its extreme specialization and dependence upon exports of a few staple foodstuffs and raw materials, while the political conservatism of the people and the decentralized, federal structure of government made it difficult to devise effective means for dealing with a major economic crisis. The three levels of government—federal, provincial, and municipal—seemed unprepared and incapable of coping with the unemployment and destitution of the Depression Thirties. In November 1932 the federal Minister of Labour, the Honourable W.A. Gordon, admitted in the House of Commons that there were 850,000 people on relief. By February 1935 the number had risen to approximately 1,250,000. Standards for relief varied widely among provinces and municipalities, ranging from as low as \$10.00 monthly plus a 98lb. sack of flour for a family of five in Saskatchewan.

The most pressing problem, in some respects, was the plight of single, homeless unemployed men, who in 1931 were estimated to number some 70,000. 31/ In their aimless wanderings about the country, hard-pressed provincial and municipal relief agencies were reluctant to meet their needs, and they suffered serious deterioration in physical condition and morale. And, from the official viewpoint in Ottawa, they constituted a danger to established authority. As stated by a government spokesman in Parliament: "Their morale low, they were very susceptible to the contagion of Communist ideas and to the influence of subversive organizations." 32/

The severity of depression and unemployment, coupled with the wholly inadequate means available to governments at all levels to cope with the problems that ensued, led to widespread hardship, unrest and violence. Niggardly provisions for relief that kept the unemployed and destitute in a state of slow starvation, at best, became a major issue. In the absence of effective leadership and policy from organized labour or the established political parties, the Communist Party, through its main affiliate, the Workers' Unity League, stepped in to fill the void. Unemployed organizations were formed across the country, to demonstrate for better relief, to fight evictions and so on.

In the face of these threats the Conservative federal government, under Prime Minister R.B. Bennett, responded with two major steps, among others:

- 1) In 1931, eight leading Communist Party officials were arrested on charges laid under Section 98 of the Criminal Code, dating back to the years of World War I and the hysteria generated by the Winnipeg General Strike. They were tried, found guilty and imprisoned for several years in

Kingston Penitentiary. Such measures appeared to have little deterrent effect upon the activities of the WUL among the unemployed.

2) In 1932 a system of work relief camps was established for single unemployed males, under the administration of the Department of National Defence. The program was originally conceived by General A.G.L. McNaughton, Canada's Chief of Staff, who prepared a plan for Premier Bennett on 19 hours' notice. It was described officially as being designed for the preservation of the morale of the youth of Canada by keeping them in such physical and mental health that they would be re-employable when economic conditions improved. The men were to be fed and housed in numerous camps across the country, and to be employed in the construction of various public works and military installations. As stipulated in the plan submitted, its cost was not to exceed \$1.00 a day per man, of which 20 cents was to be in cash for spending money, for those days on which the men actually worked. 33/

The fact of military administration in particular, and the limited relief pay and facilities in terms of the work expected from the men, frequently in isolated and harsh conditions, rendered the program vulnerable to attack and, on occasion, violent protest.

British Columbia, or more specifically Vancouver, tended to be a major focal point of organization and agitation among the unemployed during the early 1930's, for several reasons. There was the long tradition of radicalism and agitation, especially during depression periods, as noted earlier. Secondly, the depression of the 1930's hit British Columbia particularly hard, because of its specialized and unstable economy. And finally, there were the thousands of unemployed and displaced from other provinces who were attracted to the British Columbia coast, particularly in winter, because of

its relatively mild climate. Desperation, fanned by organized agitation, drove the unemployed to participate in demonstrations and riots, violence and property damage on an unprecedented scale, and they were met with force and violence from police on a similarly unprecedented scale.

Within months of the great stock market crash of 1929, unemployed associations began to appear. The Vancouver Unemployed Workers' Association in December of 1929 was the first known. 34/ Shortly after it was organized, several unemployed raided the city relief office and later two leaders were arrested as Communist agitators. 35/ This was to be a familiar pattern in relations between unemployed and the authorities.

Various expedients were attempted by all three levels of government to deal with the problem of unemployment relief. Two centres were established for the single unemployed in Vancouver but these were later closed after several riots. The married unemployed were given relief by means of a "gunny sack parade" at which married men lined up in front of an old church building on the Cambie Street grounds to receive their quota of food and tokens exchangeable for shelter and fuel. Mass meetings on the grounds, parades, and protest marches to the City Hall by the unemployed, were attacked repeatedly by forces from the RCMP, the provincial police, and a specially trained "riot squad" of mounted city police armed with long, lead-weighted clubs. There were numerous serious riots in which hundreds were injured in Vancouver during the first few years of the Great Depression. 36/

In the face of these difficulties, the relief line-up system was abandoned and relief was dispensed directly to the married unemployed in their own homes. The segregation of the single men led the WUL to form a second organization, the Single Unemployed Workers' Association.

To relieve a deteriorating and dangerous situation, the provincial government late in 1931 started building relief camps for the single unemployed, mostly in isolated areas in the interior of the province. At first those in the camps were paid two dollars a day, but this was soon reduced to \$7.50 a month plus board. By May of 1932 there were estimated to be 8,000 men in these camps in British Columbia, while another 64,000 were on relief in the rest of the province. 37/ According to numerous critics, the administration of the relief camps in British Columbia proved to be inefficient and hampered by the corruption of some administrative officials. 38/

The centre of unemployed action and organization by the Communist WUL now turned to the camps, which were transferred to federal administration and placed under the Department of National Defence on May 1, 1933. Under the new administration, the remuneration was reduced to 20 cents a day, and relief camps were established in other provinces. At their peak in 1934 an estimated 25,000 or more men were "hived away" in "bush camps" across the country, and during the four years they were in operation more than 115,000 men had been in them at one time or another. 39/

According to critics of the program, conditions in the "bush camps" were such as to build up frustration and resentment to an explosive point. 40/ The camps for the most part were established in isolated locations, lacking the facilities of an established community. Because they were expected to be temporary, to meet conditions of depression and unemployment that were assumed to be merely transitional, they were devoid of recreational facilities, reading material, or means for pursuing hobbies or interests. As Gray points out 41/, the pay of 20 cents per diem, and tobacco allowance of 10 cents a week, "affronted human dignity as little else could

have done. It was just the right size to be insulting." The rigidly authoritarian lines on which the Camps were administered, under military control, and the prohibition of any sort of organization or representative committee among the men themselves to deal with problems and grievances, rendered the men that much more vulnerable to "underground" organization by Communists.

A quite different set of conclusions was offered by C/CWO G.M. LeFresne in his lengthy study of the relief camp experiment. 42/ As a military historian attached to the Canadian Armed Forces he perhaps felt called upon to support the record of the Department of National Defence in its administration of the program, against the charges of numerous critics. He stresses repeatedly that the men in the camps were far better off than their contemporaries who were left to "ride the rails" and survive as best they could under conditions of mass unemployment and meagre and uncertain relief. Food, medical and dental care and other essentials were ample, and on a par with those that were standard for personnel in the Permanent Force. 43/ The Department had meagre funds for recreational facilities, but in most cases these were provided adequately from private volunteer sources, or by the men themselves. 44/ The camps were not run on rigid, authoritarian military lines. While military officers provided the overall supervision, local and detailed operation of the camps was left to civilians. 45/

The men, LeFresne feels, had only a few legitimate complaints, and these were magnified out of all proportion by "Communist agitators." One was the element of compulsion involved. In principle, single unemployed men were accepted for work relief in the camps only if they volunteered for it. In fact, in many cases, financially hard-pressed municipalities relieved

themselves of looking after single unemployed men by refusing to give them relief unless they volunteered for service in the camps and could prove that they were unacceptable to the Department of National Defence, for physical or other reasons. 46/

A more serious charge concerned the loss of civil rights of free speech and freedom to organize among men in the camps, under the rules and regulations enforced by the Department. These are best portrayed in two brief statements of official policy. In one, Colonel Spry, Director of Organizational and Personnel Services, as quoted in the House of Commons, stated that:

The Department will not countenance any steps to bring accusations before the tribunal of public opinion, either by speeches, or letters inserted in the newspapers, by men actively employed in relief work. Such a proceeding is a glaring violation of the rules and shows a contempt for properly constituted authority. 47/

There were later amendments to the regulations, the main gist of which was that complaints or grievances were to be submitted by individuals only, and through proper channels in the chain of command in the system of administration. A letter of instruction to camp supervisors, concerning the amendments, stated that,

...to this end camp grievance committees or other organizations of like character will not be permitted, nor will complaints by groups, either verbally or in writing be entertained. 48/

LeFresne's explanation, or justification, of these regulations is as follows:

The object of the regulations, although designed to keep the complaints away from the public's attention, was not to prevent criticism of the government as an end in itself;

rather it was to prevent the members of the unemployed from being encouraged to take violent action which might be regretted later. In the tense situation that existed during the Depression, especially where large numbers of men were grouped together such as in the relief camps, explosions were always a possibility. The policy of the Department, then, was to protect the men against themselves. In doing so, the Department did not leave the men bereft of all means of redress. They could make complaints provided they did so as individuals and put their grievances in writing. To the departmental officials this was a reasonable regulation; hence, they made the claim that the rules "were no more stringent than those of a well conducted construction or lumber camp", and did not feel that they were being hypocrites. To the soldier who has become accustomed to such a system of redress, the regulations would not seem unreasonable, even if to the civilian they might. One might say that the agitators' complaints in this respect had some foundation, but that they were not as serious as they were made to appear. 49/

The restrictions on grievance committees were perhaps unduly harsh, LeFresne observes, for the weak and dependent position of relief camp workers, as individuals, probably inhibited them from airing legitimate grievances in many cases. "In all fairness to the men," he writes, "they should have been allowed to organize or at least to present group petitions. This would have given each worker a measure of protection for himself and at the same time have enabled the Department to hear more grievances than was possible under the system actually adopted." But here again, he argues, the position of the government was justifiable, or at least understandable, in view of the circumstances of the time. To quote:

To appreciate the attitude of the authorities one must recall the delicate situation in Canada during the depression as a result of the masses of unemployed and demoralized men wandering the streets. As a matter of fact, one of the objects of the relief camps had been to keep the men under some degree of supervision. If the authorities had allowed any form of group activity along this line, such activity could very easily have gotten out of control. The government thus faced the dilemma of permitting organized protests and running the risk of trouble should these protests get out of hand, or adhering to rules against such activities and thus appearing unduly

strict and dictatorial, even if provision was made for individual protests as a means of correcting grievances. In the end the government chose the second alternative. This, of course, meant that the relief personnel were circumscribed as far as their civil rights were concerned. 50/

However adequate or inadequate conditions in the relief camps may have been, as portrayed in the divergent interpretations outlined above, the fact remains that, contrary to the hopes of the government, they generated frustration and unrest, and provided a fertile field for organized agitation and violent protest. The meagre substitute of relief in lieu of wages for productive employment, together with administration of the program by the Department of National Defence, and the restrictions of civil rights within the camps, made them particularly vulnerable targets.

Out of these conditions was formed the Relief Camp Workers' Union of the WUL. The Union played a dual role, as agitator and propagandist for the Communist Party, and the more limited role of a campworkers' organization demanding, and on occasion striking for, better conditions, recognition of camp committees, and abolition of the so-called "slave camp" system.

Several major disturbances were attributed to such "subversive" elements, as at Long Branch, Ontario, in 1933; at Valcartier and Rockcliffe in July 1935; at Dundurn, Saskatchewan in December 1935; and in a great number of the camps in British Columbia in 1933, 1934 and 1935. 51/ By far the largest and most serious of these protest demonstrations was the one that gave rise to the "On-to-Ottawa Trek" and the "Regina Riot" on Dominion Day, 1935. This merits an account in some detail.

During December 1934, 1,500 men from camps in British Columbia "hopped the freights" and headed to Vancouver to start the first major Relief Camp

Workers' strike. But the time was not deemed ripe and the men headed back to the camps to regroup. In April 1935 numbers estimated as high as 4,000 again converged on Vancouver demanding work and wages at 50 cents an hour, abolition of military control of the camps, recognition of camp committees, and other improvements. 52/

The demands of the strikers regarding improved pay and conditions in the camps could only be met by the federal government and it chose to ignore them. The strikers maintained themselves for several weeks by donations from sympathizers and by collecting money in special "tag days". As funds became scarce, and the men became hungrier, relations with the city authorities, never amicable at best, were increasingly strained. Clashes between police and strikers became more numerous.

That these men were far from an unorganized rabble soon became evident from the events that followed. The strict military conditions imposed in the relief camps had apparently enabled the WUL leaders to organize the relief camp strikers into a disciplined, semi-military organization that kept Vancouver in turmoil for several weeks.

Twelve hundred of the more militant and able-bodied of the strikers were organized into three "divisions", each under separate leaders with broad strategy planned by a co-ordinating committee.

These divisions were able to carry out an effective campaign of harassment. In marches and demonstrations, each division would take a different route in the city, or pick a different target for attack, so as to keep police forces dispersed and confused.

One major clash occurred when a division of 400 strong marched into the Hudson Bay Department store in the centre of Vancouver. A serious riot developed in the store when a large force of police arrived to evict the demonstrators. There was extensive property damage to the premises and scores of injuries and arrests resulted from the fighting. As news of the clash spread, the two other "divisions" began to march towards the store in support of their comrades, followed by hundreds of spectators and sympathizers. Attempts by police to stop them led to further clashes. Finally the Mayor of Vancouver, Gerald McGeer, read the Riot Act and the men were prevailed upon to return peacefully to their headquarters. 53/

The next step in this well-organized campaign was, in effect, to black-mail more relief out of the city of Vancouver in the face of Ottawa's intransigence. While two "divisions" of the union carried out diversionary marches towards downtown stores to draw away police, the third division quickly captured and occupied the city museum, located in a virtually impregnable defensive position on the top floor of the public library. The other two divisions then organized a mass demonstration of thousands of spectators and sympathizers in the streets adjoining the library and museum, that tied up city traffic for several hours. Large donations of food and tobacco were passed up to the "sit-in strikers". 54/

The upshot of this complicated effort was that the Chief of Police, in the company of the president of the longshoremen's union, negotiated with the strikers. An agreement was finally reached with the Mayor of Vancouver, Gerald McGeer, whereby the strikers would vacate the museum and help disperse the crowd if six days' relief was provided for all the men. This was accomplished without further confusion or untoward incident.

During the ensuing week, as Liversedge recounts

While our meal tickets lasted, we concentrated all our efforts on trying to bring about negotiations with the federal government, contacts with M.L.A.'s, M.P.'s, wires to Ottawa, all without success.

A feeling of apathy was beginning to be felt amongst the camp strikers, the strain of the long struggles was beginning to be felt, and we could not ignore the fact that we were losing many of our members. 55/

It was in this atmosphere that a special mass meeting of the strikers was held, and the idea of a mass "trek" to Ottawa to discuss work and wages with the federal cabinet developed "spontaneously" from a motion introduced from the floor. To quote Liversedge again:

The three divisions endorsed the recommendation from the strike committee, and at a mass rally of all the strikers in a theatre at Main and Georgia (long since torn down) the trek was officially launched, the name chosen, the "On to Ottawa" trek, and the date set for leaving Vancouver, June 3rd, 1935. 56/

So ended our strike in Vancouver.

The "trek" to Ottawa started on June 3, 1935, as planned, and an estimated 1,000 men boarded CPR transcontinental freight trains heading east. According to the terse account in the Canadian Annual Review:

...On June 3 some 900 men broke camp and started eastward with the avowed intention of proceeding to Ottawa to place their grievances before the Dominion Government. Travelling by freight train, their ranks were swelled along the way by recruits from other camps and other unemployed individuals. At Calgary on June 7 they were reported to be 1,300 strong. This number increased at each city or camp on their forward march. On June 12, with the "army" at Swift Current, the Dominion authorities issued orders to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police that the march must be stopped at Regina. 57/

The "trek" was a well-organized movement of men operating under careful discipline. One- and two-day stops were made at various towns along the

way. Committees were organized among local citizens at each town, to arrange for billeting, food, tag-days, donations of clothing and tobacco, and the like. The "army" was joined by new recruits and appeared to be gaining new and growing public support as it moved east. 58/

The men, 2,000 strong, arrived in Regina on June 14. Three days later two Cabinet members from Ottawa arrived to confer with the strike leaders. It was arranged that a delegation from the strikers, led by Arthur Evans, should go to Ottawa to lay their case before the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable R.B. Bennett, and his Cabinet. This meeting, on June 22, degenerated into a shouting match, with Bennett calling Evans a thief and Evans calling Bennett a liar. The demands of the strikers were not even considered. 59/

When Evans returned to Regina he announced that the trek to Ottawa would continue. Earlier that day, the federal government had passed a special order-in-council authorizing the taking of all measures deemed necessary to halt the trek at Regina. The government's will was tested almost at once when the Reverend S.B. East headed out of Regina on June 27 with a five-truck convoy of strikers. It was stopped by the RCMP, who arrested all the occupants. They were charged next day under Section 98 of the Criminal Code dealing with unlawful associations. 60/

Written accounts of the riot that subsequently broke out in Regina differ widely in detail and in interpretation. 61/ The main facts appear to be as follows:

The strike leaders, after their return from Ottawa on July 1, addressed a mass meeting in Market Square, attended by several hundred strikers and

some three or four thousand spectators and sympathizers. A large force of RCMP and city police chose this occasion to attempt to arrest the strike leaders, on orders from Ottawa. When the police marched towards the speakers' platform from two sides of the square, a bloody riot developed. Some spectators fled in panic, others joined the strikers in fighting the police. From Market Square the riot surged on to other streets and fighting continued in scattered forays for almost three hours. Tear gas and revolvers were used by city police, as well as clubs by city police and RCMP, to quell the rioting. The main weapon of the strikers was rocks. At the end, a city detective, Charles Miller was dead, a dozen policemen had been seriously injured, half a dozen civilians had been shot (some estimates ran as high as forty) and more than one hundred had been injured by police clubs or by rocks thrown by strikers and their supporters. Seventy-six people were arrested in addition to the eight strike leaders. 62/

The strikers, aside from the more than one hundred who were injured or arrested, finally made their way back to their main camp in Regina, in the Exhibition Grounds. There they were kept under guard by RCMP forces armed with machine guns at the main entrances.

At this point a dispute broke out between the federal government and the government of Saskatchewan. The Premier and the Attorney General protested against the course taken by federal authorities on the grounds that it constituted an invasion of provincial jurisdiction, and that the police, acting on orders from Ottawa, had precipitated a riot while the provincial government was "considering proposals from the strikers that they should undertake their return to their camps and homes." 63/ The provincial government proceeded to take charge of the situation, and by July 5 about

1,500 men were moving westward on special trains engaged by the provincial government. 64/

Another dispute developed when the Government of Saskatchewan announced the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the riot. The federal Minister of Justice protested that the inquiry should be postponed until after criminal prosecutions arising out of the riot had been disposed of, and he questioned the propriety of an inquiry "at the instance of the Provincial Government into the course pursued by the Dominion Government or its officers in a national situation". 65/ It turned out that the Commission in its report put virtually the entire blame for the riot on the Communist Party and the Workers' Unity League, and upheld the actions taken by federal authorities. 66/

The finale of the whole episode was described briefly in the Canadian Annual Review as follows:

During and subsequent to the Regina Dominion Day riot 130 persons in all were arrested and 24 were eventually brought to trial, the hearings commencing April 14 and the charges being those of rioting, wounding and assaulting. Nine of those tried were convicted and sentenced to varying terms up to 14 months, most of them being five, six or seven months. Appeals were taken to the Court of Appeal but after some had been dismissed others were dropped. On Feb. 28, 1936, the Attorney-General announced that charges brought against five leaders of the strikers following the riot had been dropped. They were charged under Section 98 of the Criminal Code with being members of an unlawful association, namely, the Relief Camp Workers' Union. They had been allowed out on bail following preliminary hearings in July. The Attorney-General, after studying the matter, decided there was not enough evidence to warrant proceeding with the charges. 67/

THE LATER THIRTIES: 1936-39

A pronounced change in the general pattern and location of strikes and other manifestations of industrial unrest developed in the latter 1930's.

Manufacturing generally dominated the picture, accounting for almost one-half of all strikes and workers involved and two-thirds of all man-days lost. But within this broad category, the leading industries were those of textiles and machinery and equipment, where in the early 1930's it had been clothing manufacture. Extractive industries other than coal mining experienced a considerable decline in the incidence of conflict. Logging, for instance, had accounted for 7.3% of all strikes, 10% of all workers involved and 20% of all time loss from 1930 to 1935. During 1936 to 1939 these percentages declined to 2.6%, 3.9% and 3.8%, respectively. The construction industry continued to play a negligible role as compared to the pre-War I period and the 1920's, accounting for only 8.5% of all strikes, 2% of workers involved, and less than 1% of all man-days lost. Coal mining continued to account for disproportionate percentages in all three categories, namely, one-fifth, one-third and one-fifth, respectively. 68/

Accompanying these changes in concentration of strike activity by industries was a growing concentration of strike activity by region. Specifically, there was a far greater concentration than before in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, as centres of textiles and heavy industry, and an absolute and relative decrease in British Columbia, specialized as it was, and is, in extractive industries.

These changes in the broad pattern of industrial conflict in Canada, as noted earlier, appear to have been a by-product largely of major external factors emanating from the United States. Recovery from the low point of the depression appeared to be in full swing, and in 1937 gross national product in both countries reached the 1929 level. Strikes in 1937 also reached the highest peaks in frequency and workers involved, though not in time lost.

The Wagner Act in the United States in 1935, followed by the formation of the CIO, laid the groundwork for a rebirth and dramatic upsurge of militant industrial unionism. The vigorous organizing campaigns waged by the CIO in coal mining, heavy industry and in textiles in the United States, and some dramatic and tragic events accompanying them, had an electrifying effect in Canada as well as the United States. This was particularly true of the wave of "sit-down" or "sit-in" strikes in automobile plants, and the "Memorial Day Massacre" of unionists in the Chicago area during the violent and protracted "Little Steel" strike. Ontario and Quebec became the main centres of industrial unrest in Canada perhaps mainly because these provinces adjoin, and in industrial composition are the closest Canadian counterparts of, the main "centres of action" in the United States, namely, the industrial northeastern and middle western regions.

To revert to the industrial pattern again: in both the United States and Canada the two groups of industries which experienced the greatest degree of conflict in the latter 1930's were: 1) those in which unions had suffered a long decline during the 1920's and early 1930's, to the point of near disintegration, and then experienced a dramatic revival. Outstanding among these were coal mining and textiles; and 2) major "heavy" and mass production industries in which employers had stubbornly and successfully resisted unionization for decades, notably steel, automobiles, machinery and meat packing. Much of the militancy and conflict could be explained, perhaps, by the urge to "make up" for years of wage-cutting, unemployment and deprivation, as well as suppression of unionism and social protest generally. According to Labour Gazette estimates, in both 1936 and 1937 more than one-half the total time-loss in Canada occurred in those strikes in which union recognition (i.e., the refusal of employers to deal with unions) was the main issue.

Ontario

The province of Ontario, as one main centre of industrial conflict in the latter 1930's, experienced more than one-half of all strikes over Canada as a whole during 1936-37. Most of these were small, local disputes of limited duration.

Two of the more important ones, in terms of size at least, occurred in the textile industry. The Communist Workers' Unity League in the early 1930's had put considerable effort into organizing workers in the textile industry of that province, but without the somewhat spectacular results it had temporarily achieved in such industries as logging, coal and metal mining, or among the unemployed. Their efforts finally appear to have borne some fruit when carried over into the upsurge of unionism in the latter 1930's.

A strike of some 1,750 rayon textile workers occurred in Cornwall, during August 11 to September 5, 1936, in a demand for increased wages and union recognition. Pickets for the first several days prevented supplies getting into the plant for officials and maintenance men who remained in the building. As a result of a clash on August 18 between pickets and police, sixteen of the former were arrested and charged with intimidation and obstruction. Further clashes and arrests occurred before the strike finally ended on a compromise basis of a slight wage increase, but without union recognition. 69/

Another strike occurred in Cornwall the following year, of 1,700 cotton textile workers during July 21 to August 23, 1937. The demands were essentially the same as in the previous one and the terms of settlement likewise, after mediation by the Premier of Ontario. 70/

The largest and most highly publicized strike in Ontario during this period involved about 4,200 recently organized automobile workers in the General Motors plant at Oshawa during April 8 to 26, 1937, in a demand for a union agreement, wage increases and other benefits. The men walked out when negotiations between representatives of their newly-formed local of the United Automobile Workers of America and the management broke down over the question of recognizing the international union. Specifically, there was the somewhat incongruous situation of the management of the Canadian subsidiary of a United States firm refusing to deal with the negotiating committee of a Canadian local of an American "international" union because the committee included an international representative from Detroit. 71/

After the strike developed, and picketing was undertaken, the situation became more ludicrous, and highly publicized, when the Premier of Ontario, Mitchell Hepburn, got into the act. Picturing the strike as a conspiracy of "foreign agitators" attempting to "smash our export business", he mobilized a formidable force of police and military personnel to deal with the alleged crisis.

The strike ended some two and a half weeks after it began, with the company granting wage increases, a reduction of hours from 55 to 44 a week, and other minor concessions, but not formal union recognition. 72/

Such, in brief outline, was the main course of events in the Oshawa Strike of 1937. As brought out in the analysis by Neil McKenty in his biography of Premier Hepburn 73/, however, the strike had important repercussions that extended far beyond the immediate conflict as such. Indeed, on several grounds, it could be considered the most important single industrial dispute in Canada during the 1930's.

For one thing, the strike heralded the first (and ultimately successful) major thrust of "industrial" unionism into a mass production industry in the "heavy" category in Canada. It was a direct by-product or extension of the dramatic and successful campaign of the CIO in the United States during 1935-37. This was to bring a drastic and permanent change in the pattern of labour relations and industrial conflict in this country.

Hitherto, as described in preceding chapters, the main efforts to organize industrial-type unions had been undertaken largely by dissident labour movements that were opposed to the craft-oriented AFL and TLC. Among the more important of these were various radical movements in the western provinces, outstanding among which was the One Big Union; the nationalistic and anti-American All Canadian Congress of Labour, formed in the early 1920's and confined mainly to Ontario and the West; and some affiliates of the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour in Quebec. The United Mine Workers of America, whose membership was concentrated in Nova Scotia, southwestern Alberta and British Columbia, was one of the few industrial unions affiliated to the AFL and, in Canada, to the TLC. It had experienced a serious decline in size and effectiveness during the 1920's and early 1930's. The efforts of such organizations generally had ended in conspicuous failure (as in the case of the OBU) or, at best, limited success. The "heavy" mass production industries, concentrated in Ontario, had remained almost entirely unorganized, and the labour movement in that province was dominated by conservative "craft" unionism. Ontario, the most industrialized province in Canada, as noted earlier, had accounted for a disproportionately small share of industrial conflict, relative to the size of its work force and of union membership. From 1937 on, as Ontario industries became unionized, that province became the main concentration point of industrial conflict in

Canada. There was, in turn, a considerable "spillover" or "demonstration effect" into Quebec.

There were important political and legal repercussions from the Oshawa strike as well. Premier Hepburn exploited it for political (among other) purposes and made it a major issue in his successful campaign for re-election. With the support of major business interests and leading newspapers in the province he adopted extreme measures, some of doubtful legality, to defeat the strike and halt the spread of industrial unionism. In so doing he created serious splits within the Liberal Party in Ontario and growing tension between the federal and provincial Liberals. Two of Hepburn's cabinet ministers, Attorney-General Arthur Roebuck and Minister of Labour David Croll resigned. Croll, in his letter of resignation, wrote that he "preferred walking with the workers to riding with General Motors." 74/

The issues raised by the strike, however, created an even more serious split within the opposition Conservative Party, which enabled Hepburn, with the support of the federal Liberals, to win a landslide victory in the provincial election of 1937. The Conservative provincial leader, Earl Rowe, upheld a moderate, liberal policy on the question of union recognition and the right to bargain. His chief lieutenant and provincial organizer, George Drew, resigned and successfully ran in the election as an independent in support of Hepburn's stand on unions.

The strike, finally, brought into sharp focus the whole question of government labour policy, particularly concerning workers' freedom to organize in unions of their own choosing for collective bargaining. A more dramatic issue concerned the use of federal police forces, in the form of the RCMP, in labour disputes under provincial jurisdiction.

Some of the details surrounding these various events, as described by McKenty, provide a complicated and bizarre picture of the somewhat hysterical industrial relations "climate" in Ontario during the latter 1930's. 75/

The dramatic and successful organizing campaign of the CIO in the United States, particularly the wave of "sit-in" strikes that began in the General Motors plant at Flint, Michigan, had generated in Ontario widespread fear of and opposition to that organization, and vague terrors of a "Communist conspiracy." The CIO—United Automobile Workers' organizing campaign had led to a brief wildcat strike at the General Motors plant in Oshawa early in 1937.

The response of Premier Hepburn, with the support of some leading newspapers, was extreme. In line with an editorial in the Toronto Globe and Mail entitled, "Keep the Agitators Out" (referring mainly to Hugh Thompson, International Representative of the UAW) Hepburn communicated with the federal Minister of Immigration as to the possibility of preventing entry of United States labour organizers and others of "John L. Lewis's paid agitators in Canada." 76/

Hepburn's extremist views and actions on this occasion and later probably represented a calculated campaign to exploit the pervading fear of the CIO in particular and Communism in general, and the prospects of violence and disorder that these would bring—fears that had been whipped up by vituperative campaigns in major newspapers and other media. They were probably motivated also, in large part, by the fear among prominent mine owners and shareholders (including George McCulloch, publisher of the Globe and Mail) that if the CIO were not stopped at Oshawa it would next organize the mining and smelting industry of northern Ontario, a major source of

income and revenue for the province. The Presidents of the McIntyre-Porcupine and of the Hollinger Consolidated Mines announced that they would shut down operations rather than "submit to CIO domination." Hepburn supported them with the statement: "Let me tell Lewis and his gang here and now that they'll never get their greedy paws on the mines of Northern Ontario." 77/

The major strike in the Oshawa plant of General Motors during April 1937, as noted earlier, had developed over the issue of recognition. The employees had been organized in a "company union" headed by C.H. Millard, who later became Canadian Director of the United Steel Workers of America. In the course of the organizing campaign headed by Hugh Thompson during late 1936 and early 1937, Millard and most of the members of the "company union" had joined the newly established UAW Local 222. The General Motors management in Oshawa, however, refused to recognize and bargain with representatives of the UAW Local if they included Thompson.

Hepburn supported the company on this issue. His attempt to settle the dispute by personal mediation broke down when he refused to meet with a negotiating committee that included Thompson, on the grounds that "I will have nothing to do with any paid agitator from a foreign country." 78/

Hepburn then decided to break the strike with a show of force. Said Hepburn: "This is the first open attempt on the part of Lewis and the CIO to assume the position of dominating and dictating to Canadian industry. We believe the time for a showdown is at the start." He wired the federal Minister of Justice, the Honourable E. Lapointe, to request despatch of a force of RCMP to maintain "law and order". The request was complied with. One hundred RCMP officers, seventy unmounted and thirty mounted, were placed at the disposal of the provincial Premier. 79/

A fiery speech to the Oshawa strikers by Homer Martin, then President of the International UAW, apparently alarmed Hepburn. Reporting the situation in Oshawa as "critical," he wired the Honourable Mr. Lapointe for an additional 100 RCMP personnel. He also wired Prime Minister MacKenzie King to protest that Ottawa Labour Minister Rogers' offer to mediate the dispute constituted "unwarranted interference" by the federal government. 80/

Lapointe's refusal to send the additional 100 RCMP requested added to the tension developing between Hepburn and the federal Liberal government. He wired Lapointe again, demanding that he take back the first 100 RCMP and announced that he would mobilize his own police forces to deal with the situation. Thereupon he began organization of a "task force" of special constables to reinforce the regular provincial police, seventy-five of whom were on "constant alert" at Queen's Park to "maintain law and order in this Province." As McKenty describes the ensuing drama:

Special constables, soon dubbed 'Hepburn's Hussars', eventually numbered about 400. Many of them were recruited from university students and veterans' organizations. The plan was to provide uniforms, training and twenty-five dollars weekly pay while on call. Equipment was scarce. The Premier, however, had been in communication with a firm in New Haven, Connecticut, suppliers of 'everything in police equipment except uniforms', which assured him that special gases, automatic riot guns, handcuffs, revolvers, high-powered lights and holsters could be shipped immediately. Presumably on the supposition that cavalry might be needed, The Eglinton Hunt Club offered the government sixty horses. The commissioned officers and non-commissioned personnel of the 136rd Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force, wired Hepburn that they were prepared to take up arms again to keep 'foreign malcontents' out of Canada.

As the clatter of marching men under the command of that veteran of the imperial wars, Colonel Ian Hunter (Liberal, St. Patrick) sounded on Toronto's squares, officials in Oshawa became increasingly annoyed. Mayor Alex Hall (who had been dismissed by the Hepburn Government as Crown Attorney in 1934) wired the Premier inviting him to visit Oshawa unannounced 'to see first-hand the behaviour of the men and the remarkable condition of law and order existing.' 81/

Faced with such a formidable show of force in support of the employer in the dispute, the UAW in Oshawa was forced to back down in its demands. The strike soon ended when the International Executive of the UAW withdrew financial support from the strike, in deciding that it had to be settled locally. While the union did not win formal recognition from the company, its spokesmen claimed victory on the face-saving formula that agreement had been signed "by men who were members of the U.A.W., that the Oshawa local was a U.A.W. local and therefore a C.I.O. affiliate." 82/ The agreement ran concurrently with that signed between the parent General Motors Company and UAW in the United States.

On the other hand, there was little doubt that the majority of the public supported Hepburn in his policy, and viewed the settlement as a victory over the CIO. Support came from groups covering a wide range of the economic and political spectrum, from business organizations and, in some cases, trade union representatives. The President of the Toronto Board of Trade voiced appreciation of the "prompt, energetic, patriotic and statesmanlike action you have taken to meet the challenge of foreign agitators." More surprising, A.R. Mosher, President of the All-Canadian Congress of Labour, praised Hepburn's efforts to maintain Canadian unions free from "foreign domination." Mosher wrote the Premier:

Communists are determined to dominate the AFL unions in Canada as well as the CIO unions, and a great mistake will be made if AFL unions in Canada are excluded from any efforts designed to curb domination by foreign agitators and Communists. 83/

Despite the extreme position taken and tactics adopted during the strike, and despite growing conflict with the federal government (including personal repudiation of MacKenzie King's leadership) the Premier had solid

support from the federal Liberals in his election campaign in 1937. Six cabinet ministers participated actively in the campaign, in which the Oshawa strike, the CIO and the threat of communism provided the main issues. To a large audience in Saint Thomas, with federal Minister Ian McKenzie beside him on the platform assuring him of full support from Ottawa, Hepburn explained why he had felt it necessary to recruit such a formidable force of special constables during the strike:

The organization of the special force was well advised, for our police had confidential reports that 15,000 Communists were ready to take part in any uprising, whether it took place in Toronto or anywhere else. 84/

The strike itself had been notably peaceful and orderly, with not a single arrest during its entire duration.

Hepburn's successful campaign against the CIO, with the support of federal Liberals, culminating in his landslide victory in the election of 1937, undoubtedly set back the cause of industrial unionism for several years in Ontario and probably over Canada as a whole. Undoubtedly it encouraged many employers to stiffen their resistance to recognizing unions, and helped delay the adoption, by federal and provincial governments alike, of legislation more favourable to unionism and collective bargaining. Not until the latter years of World War II, and only after bitter and widespread industrial conflict during the most critical wartime years, was organized labour in Canada able to achieve a size, strength and legal status comparable to its counterpart in the United States.

Quebec 85/

The largest as well as some of the most spectacular and violent

strikes of the latter 1930's occurred in Quebec, again concentrated in 1937. One strike of 5,000 women's clothing workers in Montreal, from April 15 to May 17, 1937, for increased wages and shorter hours, developed mainly over union rivalry between the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union and a newly organized "national" union of the Catholic Confederation. The strike developed after some 100 employers refused to negotiate with the ILGWU, which had been the dominant organization hitherto. The employers had previously signed agreements with the Catholic union, and applied for its approval by the Minister of Labour under the Quebec Collective Labour Agreements Extension Act. 86/ ILGWU spokesmen accused the Catholic union of "selling out" the workers by making personal deals with the employers. During the course of the strike several union leaders were threatened with arrest for alleged intimidation. An agreement was finally reached, and the strike ended through provincial conciliation. 87/

The largest and most spectacular strike in Quebec involved some 9,000 cotton textile workers in Montreal, and became virtually an industry-wide shutdown when it spread to mills in St. Gregoire de Montmorency, Sherbrooke, Magog, Drummondville and Valleyfield.

The scope of the strikes, and the violence that developed, were similar, on a larger scale, to those that had occurred in the early 1900's as described earlier. In the 1937 conflict, however, the outstanding issue was that of union recognition, and the right to bargain for collective labour agreements, by the Catholic National Federation of Textile Workers.

The Great Depression of the 1930's had wrought drastic and permanent changes in the Catholic Confederation. Economic nationalism and ethnic tensions between English and French in the province of Quebec were

brought into sharp relief. The English-speaking minority, concentrated in the more secure and better-paid executive, professional, and salaried positions, were to a large extent insulated from the depression. Its main burden fell on the masses of French-Canadian wage earners and small proprietors. The dominant role that English-Canadian or United States-owned and managed corporations had played in Quebec's rapid industrialization during the 1920's made them a special target of attack by lay and clerical spokesmen of various nationalist organizations. 88/

Intense economic nationalism temporarily imbued the Catholic Confederation with a new strength and militancy. During the recovery of the later 1930's it expanded rapidly in hitherto unorganized industries such as textiles, asbestos mining and smelting, aluminum, iron and steel, and shipbuilding. Several of its affiliates became involved in long and bitter strikes, particularly in the textile and shipbuilding industries. These were accompanied by scattered but highly publicized incidents of property damage and violence. During the series of textile strikes in 1937, for instance, numerous plants were attacked by mobs of strikers, and violent clashes broke out with the police. Stones were thrown through the windows of some English-speaking executives' homes. The American manager of a silk mill in one town was kidnapped while playing golf, driven across the United States border, and told to stay in his own country. An inkpot was thrown in the face of the President of the Dominion Textile Company when he visited a plant that was on strike. 89/ Again, during a shipyard strike in Sorel, two fires of suspected incendiary origin threatened the home of a prominent employer. 90/

These developments coincided with, and undoubtedly were influenced by, the new and dramatic upsurge of industrial unionism under the leadership of the newly formed CIO. Much of the violence and disorder could be attributed to the inexperience of hitherto unorganized workers and the weak and decentralized structure of the Catholic Confederation. Such conditions made it difficult for the leaders to hold the members in line once industrial relations had reached the stage of overt conflict.

The violence and disorder, however, also brought out a basic contradiction in Catholic unionism that presented a serious dilemma to its leaders and to the Church itself in Quebec. Catholic unions, in principle, based their policies on Rerum novarum and on later encyclicals that counselled harmony and co-operation between workers and employers, and the avoidance of strikes and class conflict. An important force behind the new growth and militancy of Catholic unionism in Quebec, however, was the intense nationalism which members of the clergy, among others, had been instrumental in arousing. It tended to reach violent proportions among low-paid and hitherto docile French-Canadian workers in mass production industries. The hardships of the depression had engendered widespread unrest and smouldering resentment against employers. These feelings were intensified where employers were culturally alien and English-speaking. Adding to the tension and hostility was the stubborn open-shop policy of a number of prominent employers who refused to recognize and bargain with any unions, even those as conciliatory as the Catholic syndicates had been. 91/

The Church finally felt compelled to resist the mounting tide of ethnic and class conflict. Several strikes were settled by informal negotiation between representatives of the Church, the employers, and the provincial

government, without consulting the workers involved. This policy aroused a good deal of latent anti-clerical sentiment among French-Canadian workers and greatly weakened the Catholic labour movement for several years. The turning point came in the bitter and violent four-week strike of the National Syndicate of Textile Workers against the Dominion Textile Company during the summer of 1937. Cardinal Villeneuve intervened to end the strike on the grounds that, as he put it, it "constitutes an entirely dangerous state of affairs for the public peace". 92/ He prevailed on the strikers to return to work on the promise of the company to negotiate an agreement within three months. The result was disastrous to the National Syndicate. The agreement, signed without the consent of the membership, established minimum rates of only 10 cents an hour and raised hourly rates by only 4%. The union, which had more than 13,000 members at its peak in 1937, declined to only 642 by 1940. 93/ Similar tactics were used to settle a strike of clothing workers in Montreal. 94/

A series of strikes of much smaller magnitude also affected shipyards and other metallurgical industries in Sorel, Quebec, during 1937 and 1938. Here, again, the unions involved were syndicats catholiques, while the employers in this case were predominantly French-speaking. The strikes generated even more prolonged and intense intimidation, violence and property damage than had occurred in textiles, and proved much more difficult to settle. Conflicts within the unions involved, apparently between the leaders and militants among the rank-and-file, and among clergy within the Church, as well as with local business men and authorities, contributed all-in-all to a state of extreme bitterness and confusion in Sorel. 95/

British Columbia

British Columbia, in contrast to Ontario and Quebec, experienced a marked decline in overt industrial unrest and conflict during the later 1930's, at least as measured by the incidence of strikes and lockouts. As one measure, for instance, the time loss from strikes during the last three years of the decade declined by 80% from the preceding three years. 96/

This relative quiescence on the labour scene could be explained by several factors. During the early 1930's in British Columbia the more conservative "business unionists" of the TLC had remained firmly in control of the established trade union movement, and this had suffered heavy losses in membership because of particularly severe unemployment in the province. Aggressive organization and union militancy were left largely to the Communist Workers' Unity League, which concentrated largely upon workers in the main extractive industries, mainly logging and sawmilling, mining and fishing, as well as the unemployed. When the WUL disbanded in 1935 and its affiliated organizations and members proceeded to re-enter the established trade union movement, it created a serious left wing-right wing division while at the same time leaving an "organizational vacuum" which the prevailing union establishment was unable or unwilling to fill. This was compounded by two further developments: (1) the formation of the CIO in the United States and its influence on Canadian unions; and (2) the rapid rise to political prominence in British Columbia of the Socialist Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). By the latter 1930's this party claimed more than one-third of the popular vote and elected enough members to the provincial

legislature to constitute the official Opposition. The CCF won growing support from union members, but in the process brought a split within the ranks of the left, between socialists and communists, as well as between left and right.

These intense political and ideological differences temporarily incapacitated the trade union movement in the province from functioning effectively in the area of industrial relations. As Phillips 97/ observed, "the normal business functions of the Vancouver Labour Council were often overshadowed by political debates."

Another deterrent to militant unionism and strike action in British Columbia during the late 1930's was the new legislation passed in 1937, namely, the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. It carried over restrictions on freedom to strike or lockout, as had applied previously in the IDIA and its British Columbia counterpart. A new feature was the principle adopted from the United States Wagner Act of 1935, of guaranteeing, or at least proclaiming, labour's right to organize. But, in contrast to the Wagner Act, and in line with the principle introduced by MacKenzie King prior to World War I, it restricted collective bargaining to committees of employees rather than to unions, thus encouraging the growth of company unionism.

These divisions and legal restrictions, and the resulting ineffectiveness of trade unionism in British Columbia, were glaringly illustrated in the attempt to organize the province's most important industry, namely, logging and sawmilling. When the WUL abandoned its efforts and sought re-affiliation with the established trade union movement, it involved having the

AFL-TLC Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners assume jurisdiction. This arrangement applied in the northwest states of the United States as well as in British Columbia. Logging and sawmilling workers, however, were assigned a distinctly second-class status in the union and complained of inadequate "servicing". This generated widespread dissatisfaction and resulted, in 1937, in a "breakaway", under the leadership of Harold Pritchett, former WUL organizer in British Columbia, and in the formation of the International Woodworkers of America (IWA). The new organization affiliated with the CIO when the latter was established as a separate congress after its affiliates were expelled from the AFL.

Antagonism to the IWA from the Carpenters' Union and other TLC organizations in British Columbia was intense and, in the United States, violent. Efforts of the IWA to organize lumber and allied workers in British Columbia likewise met forceful resistance from employers and the provincial government, particularly because of its Communist leadership and the opposition it faced from the prevailing union establishment. This was exemplified in two strikes the union became involved in, in Blubber Bay, British Columbia. The second one, which lasted 11 months, had particularly violent overtones. Strikers were reportedly attacked on several occasions by groups of "scabs" supported by police. One union organizer was allegedly so badly beaten by police that he had to be hospitalized and died a short time later. 98/

Defeat in this long and costly strike almost destroyed the IWA organization in British Columbia. It did not experience a significant revival until well on into World War II, under the favorable circumstances of full employment, labour shortages in the lumber industry, and new legislation that protected unions' rights to organize and bargain collectively with employers.

Relief Camp Workers' Strike of 1938

The other major incident of labour conflict in British Columbia during the latter 1930's was the second strike of relief camp workers in 1938.

The "slave camp" system that had been established under the Conservative administration of Prime Minister R.B. Bennett, the limitations and hardships of which had provoked the violent "On-to-Ottawa Trek" of 1935, was abolished when the Liberals came to power in the election of 1935. The camps were reorganized and relief workers were paid fifteen dollars a month over and above board and lodgings.

The remnants of the Communist-organized Relief Camp Workers' Union were reorganized in 1936 to adapt to the new administration. The new organizations' initial demands were for minimum wages of 50 cents an hour and the eight-hour day. Like its predecessor, it received no official recognition, and resorted to the familiar tactics of mass demonstrations.

During the recession of late 1937 and 1938, rising unemployment in British Columbia brought a resurgence of organization among the jobless. The Relief Project Workers' Union won wide support among various unions and radical political groups in Vancouver and Victoria.

A crisis developed during the recession year of 1938. Despite rising unemployment, the provincial government proceeded to close relief project camps, while relief loans to the municipalities were curtailed. The result was a mass migration of single unemployed men to Vancouver, reaching an estimated 6,000 by May. As in 1935, under predominantly Communist leadership they organized demonstrations and mass meetings and supported themselves

largely by "tag-days" or "tin-canning" and "street-begging". The government reacted by stopping relief to those from the Prairies, offering them free transportation home instead, and prohibiting all "tin-canning".

The Relief Project Workers' Union, reacted to these policies by resorting to a strategy similar to that of 1935. Three separate groups or "divisions", comprising some 1,200 of the more organized or militant elements of the unemployed, invaded the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Georgia Hotel and the Main Post Office, to stage a "sit-in", (or "live-in"), as a method of leverage for extracting concessions from the various levels of government.

The union's strategy was less successful on this occasion than its predecessor's had been in 1935. The group esconced in the Georgia Hotel, after occupying it for 10 days, was persuaded to vacate the premises after receiving \$500 in relief vouchers. The two groups in the Art Gallery and Post Office were not dislodged until six weeks later. Harold Winch, CCF leader in the provincial legislature, was induced by the authorities to negotiate an orderly withdrawal of the demonstrators from the Art Gallery. The group occupying the Post Office, by contrast, was not dislodged until after a full-scale assault by a force of the RCMP, complete with tear gas, clubs and whips. The final toll was thirty-five persons injured, including five policemen; twenty-two arrests; and damage in the tens of thousands of dollars. 99/

General: Epilogue to the Thirties

The "new wave" of union militancy, industrial unrest and strikes launched in 1935 reached its peak in 1937. The severe depression and unemployment during 1938, followed by a major split in the labour movement of

Canada, when the Trades and Labour Congress expelled Canadian affiliates of the CIO, temporarily destroyed much of this momentum. The incidence of strikes fell off sharply in frequency, size and time loss during 1938-39.

The depression decade of the 1930's generally had a profound and lasting impact on the attitudes and policies of organized labour and management. Some of its effects seem all too apparent even today, more than a generation later. The conciliatory "hat-in-hand" policy of the conservative business unionism of the 1920's had proved disastrously ineffective in that decade, and even more in the depression 1930's. Effectiveness of unions thus came to be identified with militancy. The severe hardships and deprivations of the unemployed, the vulnerability of employed workers to exploitation by their employers, the apparent indifference of the more favoured sections of the community to the plight of both groups, and the inability or unwillingness of government at all levels to provide them adequate protection and maintenance, all led to acts of desperation on a widespread scale. It seemed all too apparent, to many, that "you won't get anything in this world unless you fight for it"—if necessary, by illegal and violent means.

The frequency with which governments invoked force and violence to suppress such action, particularly in breaking up unemployed demonstrations, and in helping employers break strikes, tended to generate an image of government as an oppressor. It perhaps encouraged a widespread contempt for the law as an entity designed to protect property rather than human rights. It became a widespread attitude that the experiences of the depression reinforced, and that many of the depression generation passed on to later generations, particularly, perhaps, in the ranks of organized labour.

It is perhaps not too far-fetched to suggest that the somewhat limited success of governments, at both the federal and provincial levels, in settling disputes by compulsory conciliation procedures established under new legislation passed during and after World War II, may have been due in large part to the widespread suspicion of and hostility to government intervention engendered by its apparently one-sided role during the Depression Thirties and earlier. This seems a particularly likely hypothesis in view of the continuity in disputes settlement policy, in which the main principles of intervention were taken over from the old IDI Act of 1907, and their provincial counterparts, and largely maintained. The frequency with which the use of federal force, as exemplified in the RCMP, was used to break demonstrations and strikes was perhaps particularly damaging to the federal government's image in Canadian labour circles.

The leading role of Communists in the organizational campaigns, strikes and demonstrations of the 1930's gave them a special status and influence within organized labour, and one that has been a continued source of unrest and conflict in the industrial scene. This has been particularly apparent in British Columbia in recent years.

That the Communists were not the primary cause of the unrest and violence that prevailed seems apparent, however, when one views the tumultuous events surrounding numerous strikes conducted by the hitherto peaceful and conciliatory Catholic unions in Quebec.

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- 2/ Labour Organization in Canada, Department of Labour, Ottawa, 1930, p. 165.
- 3/ Emil Bjarnason, "Collective Bargaining in the Coal Mining Industry of Canada, 1825-1938", (M.A. Thesis in Economics, Queen's University, 1965), p. 123; See also, Labour Gazette, October, 1931, pp. 1065 et seq. According to the account in the Labour Gazette, the first shots were fired by strikers. As Bjarnason points out, however, the 22 arrested strikers could hardly have been charged with such nebulous offenses as "inciting to riot" if they had, in fact, made an armed attack on the police. Four participants in the strike who were interviewed by Bjarnason were unanimous and emphatic on the point that the strikers were unarmed.
- 4/ Bjarnason, pp. 123-4; also see, Vancouver Province, April 18, 1935.
- 5/ These incidents are recorded in issue after issue of the Labour Gazette during that period e.g. 1931, p. 130, 3 pickets arrested; 1931, p. 1065, 22 arrested; 1932, p. 280, 14 women pickets arrested; 1932, p. 150, strike leaders arrested; p. 300, 330 et seq., 22 men and 2 women arrested at Blairmore and Bellevue; 1933, p. 125, 10 arrested at Princeton; and so on.
- 6/ Labour Gazette, 1930, p. 24.
- 7/ Bjarnason, pp. 111-120.
- 8/ Ibid., p. 126.
- 9/ Labour Gazette, 1935, pp. 104-29.
- 10/ Ibid., 1930, pp. 118, 272.
- 11/ Ibid., 1931, pp. 281, 409, 520.
- 12/ Ibid., 1932, pp. 962-3.
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- 14/ Ibid., 1934, p. 906.
- 15/ Ibid., 1931, pp. 1071, 1180.
- 16/ Ibid., 1934, p. 17.
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- 25/ Paul Phillips, No Power Greater—a Century of Labour in British Columbia, British Columbia Federation of Labour, Vancouver, 1967, p. 103.
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- 27/ Phillips, op. cit., p. 104.
- 28/ Sun, June 20, 1935.
- 29/ Labour Gazette, 1935, pp. 610-12, 725-8, 819, 896, 983-95, 1001, 1091.
- 30/ Considering the extreme importance of these events in Canada's history, labour and otherwise, and particularly the drama and tragedy of the Regina Riot, it is strange that so little, relatively, has been written about them in terms of scholarly research. The portrayal herein is based largely on six sources, namely; 1) R. Liversedge, Reflections on the On-to-Ottawa Trek (Broadway Printers, Vancouver, no date), an admittedly biased and partisan account, but one containing much interesting data, by one of the Communist organizers and participants in the movement; 2) c/CWO G.M. LeFresne, "The Royal Twenty Centers"—the Department of National Defence and Federal Unemployment Relief, 1932-36", Thesis, Honors Degree in History, Royal Military College, Kingston, 1962. This provides a detailed, well-documented and valuable account of the origin, development and problems of the relief camp system, administered by the Department of National Defence, for single unemployed men—the central issue that underlay the On-to-Ottawa trek and the Regina Riot. LeFresne's treatment of these latter events, however, are rather skimpy and inadequate, and seem as biased, from the polar opposite in political viewpoint, as Liversedge's; 3) W. Gray, The Winter Years—the Depression on the Prairies, (Macmillan, Toronto, 1960), the work of a newspaperman formerly employed by the Winnipeg Free Press; 4) Paul Phillips, in his history of organized labour in British Columbia, which was commented upon earlier; 5) personal observations, or memories thereof, of the writer, who observed many of the events described in Vancouver, but not Regina; and 6) the somewhat brief, and in some respects biased, account in the Canadian Annual Review, 1935-36 (pp. 312-314).

- 31/ The above figures are taken from LeFresne, op. cit., pp. 5, 9 and 181.
- 32/ Ibid., p. 10, quoting Debates, House of Commons, 1934, II, 1523, and Final Report on the Unemployment Relief Scheme for the Care of Single Homeless Men Administered by the Department of National Defence, 1932-36, (Ottawa, 1937) Vol. I, p. 1.
- 33/ Ibid.
- 34/ Phillips, op. cit., p. 105.
- 35/ Ibid.
- 36/ Field notes and interviews. See also Liversedge, op. cit., passim.
- 37/ Phillips, op. cit., p. 106.
- 38/ LeFresne, op. cit., p. 20
- 39/ Gray, op. cit., p. 147.
- 40/ See Appendix A.
- 41/ For a fuller description of these, see Appendix B, quoting from Gray, op. cit., pp. 147-9.
- 42/ LeFresne, op. cit.
- 43/ Ibid., p. 55.
- 44/ Ibid., pp. 75-76.
- 45/ Ibid., pp. 28-29.
- 46/ Ibid., pp. 49-50.
- 47/ Ibid., p. 97, quoting from Debates, 1935, II, p. 2023.
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- 52/ Phillips, op. cit., p. 106.
- 53/ See account by R. Liversedge, op. cit., in Appendix C.
- 54/ See Appendix D.
- 55/ Liversedge, op. cit., p. 117.

- 56/ Ibid., p. 118.
- 57/ Canadian Annual Review, 1935-36, p. 312.
- 58/ See account by Gray, op. cit., in Appendix E.
- 59/ Gray, p. 155.
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- 61/ See Appendix F.
- 62/ See Appendix F, op. cit.
- 63/ Canadian Annual Review, op. cit., p. 313.
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- 82/ Ibid., p. 114.
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- 86/ Labour Gazette, 1937, p. 491.
- 87/ Loc. cit.
- 88/ Everett Hughes, French Canada in Transition, (University of Chicago Press, 1943), pp. 212-19; Mason Wade, The French Canadians, 1760-1945, (Toronto, Macmillan, 1955), pp. 092-3.
- 89/ See Montreal Gazette, August 20, 21, 22, and 23, 1937; Hughes, French Canada in Transition, pp. 212-13.
- 90/ Montreal Gazette, August 25, 1937, p. 11.
- 91/ See, for instance, statement by Blair Gordon, President of Dominion Textile Company, as reported in Montreal Gazette, August 23, 1937, p. 11.
- 92/ Montreal Gazette, August 28, 1937, p. 1.
- 93/ See Gilles Groulx, "Le Syndicalisme dans l'industrie textile du Quebec." M.A. thesis, unpublished, Université de Montréal, 1954, p. 78.
- 94/ See Eugene Forsey, "Clerical Fascism in Quebec," Canadian Forum, Vol. XVII (June 1937), pp. 90-92.
- 95/ A. Provost, Les Grèves de Sorel (Sténographie, Sorel, 1938). See Appendix G.
- 96/ Phillips, op. cit., p. 110.
- 97/ Ibid., p. 113.
- 98/ See Appendix H.
- 99/ See Appendix I.

CHAPTER VI

THE "FIGHTING FORTIES": 1940-1950

WORLD WAR II: 1939-45

Viewed purely from the perspective of unionism and industrial relations, World War II—and perhaps the immediate postwar period 1946-47 as well—could be interpreted as a continuation, or rather acceleration, of a trend that had become well established in the 1930's. It presents the picture of a mounting series of waves or "bursts" of organization and industrial conflict, each new peak preceding the previous one, until the all-time zenith was reached in a series of unprecedented shutdowns during 1946-47. A wave of unusually large and prolonged strikes affected major firms and industries across the country. It was analogous, broadly speaking, to the previous waves in a trend, starting in the late 1890's, that had reached a peak during 1919-20.

Both periods of peak conflict were followed by extended periods of relative stability as measured, at least, by a falling off in the incidence of strikes. In the previous period this had been accompanied by a decline in the size and effectiveness of unions. The few major strikes that did occur during the 1920's, as in coal mining, longshoring in British Columbia, and

a few other sectors, were largely acts of desperation in the face of wage cuts, declining markets, and employer campaigns to undermine and destroy unions. In most of these the unions were defeated.

In the period of relative stability following the 1946-47 peak, by contrast, unions in Canada continued to grow in size and bargaining power, albeit at a declining rate. The major strikes, with few exceptions, were comparatively orderly campaigns for tangible objectives, with little of the violence, illegality and use of police and military forces that had characterized so many previous conflicts.

The first brief burst of union organization after a long period of decline, as described earlier, had started in late 1933 and reached a peak level of conflict during 1934, under the impetus of the National Recovery Act (NRA) in the United States. It ran down during 1935, when the NRA was declared unconstitutional, and unions had no effective protection against strong counter attacks by major employers, particularly the formation of "company" unions which Section 7a of the NRA helped stimulate.

A second and much larger wave in both the United States and Canada began with passage of the Wagner Act and the beginnings of the CIO in late 1935, reaching a new and higher peak of conflict during 1937. This campaign, too, ran down temporarily during the slump of 1938 and limited recovery of 1939.

The campaign picked up new momentum again in Canada during World War II. Large enlistments in the military forces, sharply increasing government expenditures and rapidly growing output, soon brought the economy to a level of full employment and labour shortages in key industries and occupations.

Serious inflationary pressures drove the government, with its wartime emergency powers, to impose increasingly severe restrictions on the economy, including price controls and consumer rationing of necessities, wage controls, job freezing, and compulsory allocation of labour and materials.

These conditions were generally favourable to union organization, though once rigid wage, price and job controls were imposed by government fiat, the tangible gains to be won by union pressure through collective bargaining became limited. Union membership grew rapidly, as did strikes. The latter reached a new peak of intensity in 1943.

Here, for the first time in several decades, the general "pattern" of industrial relations and conflict in Canada diverged sharply from that of the United States. Previously, as seen, the ebbs and flows of union size and militancy, and the periodic waves of industrial conflict in Canada, had roughly paralleled those of the United States. The divergence in the early 1940's could be viewed as a sort of "delayed response," in Canada, to major developments that had occurred in the United States during the later 1930's.

The growth in union membership in Canada, under the special stimuli mentioned earlier, had lagged considerably behind that in the United States during the later 1930's and early 1940's. Union membership in the United States more than doubled in the space of five years, rising from approximately 5.5 million in 1935 to 7.9 million in 1940. In Canada, it grew by hardly more than one-third, from 280,000 to 362,000 during this period. Where in 1935 Canada actually had a larger percentage of non-agricultural paid employees in unions than had the United States, namely 14.6% as compared to 13.1%, by 1940 she had a far smaller proportion, i.e., 17.5% as

compared to 24.8%. Unions in Canada did not again reach parity with the United States in this respect until the 1950's. 1/

In the course of this unusually rapid growth of unionism in the United States, with the Umbrella of protection from the Wagner Act, industrial conflict reached a new peak of intensity, as noted earlier, in 1937. In that year, the total number of strikes in the United States exceeded even the previous all-time peak of 1919. Most of these, however, were relatively small strikes of brief duration, so that the total number of workers involved and days lost were less than in 1919. A number of the major strikes that did occur in the United States during the later 1930's, however, as in steel, automobiles, rubber, chemicals, textiles, and coal, did firmly establish the recognition and secure status of unions in major firms and industries that over a period of decades had stubbornly and successfully resisted organization of their employees. When the United States entered into World War II late in 1941 the federal government in that country put pressure on organized labour and management to "freeze" their relationships and avoid damaging conflict. On this basis there was a "no-strike agreement" from major labour organizations in exchange for "maintenance of membership" concessions from management.

Canada, by comparison, lagged considerably in such developments. Union membership had grown far less than in the United States during the latter 1930's and faced much more stubborn and prolonged resistance from employers. There had been a new peak of strikes during 1937 but, in comparison to the United States, they were relatively much fewer in number and far smaller in workers involved and in time loss. A high proportion of them was largely over the issue of recognition and most of them failed to achieve it. The peak year of conflict in Canada, in 1943, was in a sense more comparable to 1937

in the United States. In 1943 the number of strikes in Canada reached a new high of 402 as compared to 298 in 1919 and 285 in 1920, and total workers involved also reached a new record of 218,000, as compared to the previous one of 139,000 in 1919. These were records which, in both respects, were not to be reached again until 1966. Total working days lost, however, were less than one-third of the 1919 figure. 2/ Most of the strikes in 1943, as noted, were for union recognition and, under the exigencies of wartime, were settled quickly under government pressure.

Thus, for one of the few times in history, during World War II industrial conflict became relatively more intense and widespread in Canada than in the United States as measured by such indices as percentage of workers and union members participating in strikes, working days lost per employee and per union member, and the like.

Viewed with the wisdom of hindsight, it seems strange that governments and major employers alike in Canada, with the full view of United States experience before them, not to mention the experience of World War I, should have allowed an industrial relations crisis of such magnitude to develop during the most critical years of World War II. One would have expected them at least to recognize the "handwriting on the wall" and to prepare for it accordingly. That is to say, legislation comparable to the Wagner Act would seem to have been called for at the outset of the war, by the federal government and the major industrial provinces, so as to require union recognition and collective bargaining where unions were adequately representative of workers.

The legislatures of most provinces during the later 1930's had passed new labour statutes that varied widely in content and application. Most of

them retained in modified form the restrictions of the IDIA and added some provisions of the Wagner Act, such as freedom of association and collective bargaining on the majority principle. Various gaps and ambiguities in such legislation, (including provisions which allowed employers to form "company" unions), and lack of adequate machinery to enforce it, rendered most provincial labour statutes relatively ineffective. The federal government had limited itself to amending the Criminal Code to prohibit employers from discharging workers "solely" for reasons of union activity, a provision that was all too easy to evade in practice.

That such measures were far from adequate was brought out in an official survey by A.E. Grauer just before the war:

The hostile attitude of many employers to collective bargaining has defeated the chief purpose of unions in organizing to bring about greater equality in bargaining power.... Analysis of strikes and lockouts in Canada for six years...shows that a considerable number of strikes and a substantial loss of working time has been occasioned by disputes over recognition of unions or dismissals for union activity; and that disputes resulting from these causes have increased rather than diminished in recent years. 3/

The federal government in World War II, as in World War I, attempted to meet the mounting industrial relations crisis by using the IDIA as the "chosen instrument," despite the numerous failures and shortcomings that this measure had demonstrated during and since the previous war. Clothed with emergency wartime powers, the federal government early in 1942 extended the IDIA, with its compulsory conciliation and "cooling off" provisions, to cover all industries deemed "essential" to the war effort. This was followed by a number of supplementary wartime statutes which were designed to overcome various deficiencies in the existing legislation and meet new crises

as they developed. But the new emergency measures tended if anything to aggravate the crises, for they put additional curbs and delays on unions' freedom of action without giving them effective protection from employer opposition and attack. Thus, as pointed out above, strikes reached a new peak in frequency and numbers of workers involved, and the majority of these concerned the issue of recognition.

Strikes during this period, furthermore, became increasingly concentrated in industries that were most crucial to the war effort. During the 1930's, as noted, the main centres of strike activity had been in textiles, clothing, and lumber in certain areas. By comparison, in 1942, out of 274 of the largest strikes (354 altogether) 74 were in metal products (including such industries as iron and steel, automotive vehicles, aircraft, weapons, and other machinery and equipment), 61 were in mining and 39 in shipbuilding, whereas only 30 were in clothing and 17 in wood products. During 1943, out of 328 major strikes (402 altogether), 111 were in coal mining, 102 in metal products, 32 in shipbuilding and 21 in textiles and clothing. 4/ Over the period 1940-45 as a whole, the broad category of "manufacturing" bulked larger than ever, accounting as it did for 56.5% of all strikes, 60% of all workers involved, and 71% of all time loss from strikes. While strikes remained disproportionately frequent in coal mining, accounting for 23% of the total number and 24% of all workers involved, these were of briefer duration than before and accounted for only 17% of all time loss. 5/

Manufacturing

During the first year of the war, as in the latter 1930's, the largest strikes, as well as some of the most violent, were in the clothing and

textile industries in the province of Quebec. Two thousand artificial silk factory workers in Drummondville struck during May 11 to June 26, 1940, for recognition of their organization, the National Catholic Union of Textile Workers, in protest against a production speed-up. In the course of the strike a violent clash occurred between strikers and non-strikers and some arrests were made. Electric power and telephone connections for the struck plant were reported interfered with and the struck company's pumps were stopped. The strike was ended through federal and provincial conciliation, on the familiar basis worked out by Mackenzie King decades earlier, that is, the employer agreeing to meet with "worker committees" but refusing to recognize the union as such. 6/

A larger but briefer strike of 4,500 womens' clothing workers in Montreal occurred during April 22 to April 30, 1940, for a 20% wage increase. During this brief walkout a number of pickets were arrested and charged with assault, obstructing traffic and other misdemeanours. The strike was settled for a 10% wage increase. 7/

From then on during the war most strikes, and even more, the largest strikes, reaching unprecedented proportions for individual industries, were concentrated in the metals and "heavy goods" sector. A protracted strike of 2,800 gold miners in Kirkland Lake, Ontario, during November 18, 1941 to February 11, 1942, was of particular interest in illustrating a common feature of employer and government policies at that time. Refusal of mining companies in the area to recognize the local of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers led the latter to apply for a Board of Conciliation under the IDIA, but without taking a strike vote as the Act required. Following again the dubious precedent that Mackenzie King had

established decades earlier in coal mining in British Columbia prior to World War I, the Industrial Disputes Inquiry Commission in this case recommended that, as the mining companies refused to recognize the union, the workers should accept the employers' offer to sign agreements for the various mines with an elected committee of employees for each mine.

The union rejected this offer, and on August 15 the members voted overwhelmingly to strike. A Board of Conciliation was then established on August 22. In its final report of October 15 the Board members unanimously recommended that the mining companies should negotiate agreements with the union. The employers rejected this recommendation, whereupon the union applied for a new strike vote under the supervision of the federal Department of Labour, as required under wartime statute. Again the vote was in favour of a strike. At the request of the Minister of Labour, however, the strike was postponed for further negotiations. These were unsuccessful, and the strike began on November 18.

Early in the course of the strike 15 union members were arrested on charges of intimidation. The provincial police forces in the Kirkland Lake area were increased to prevent further disorder. On November 28 the operators refused to submit the dispute to arbitration, which the union previously had agreed to do. During December further arrests of strikers occurred, on grounds of intimidation and assault. During January, four workers were assaulted, one of whom was seriously injured. Finally, in February, the strike was terminated through the "good offices" of the Minister of Labour, without the union having achieved its goal of recognition. 8/

The largest strikes to occur later in 1941, and in 1942, were in the automobile industry of Ontario. They lacked the violent overtones of the

earlier disputes. One involved 3,700 auto parts workers in St. Catherines from September 11 to 27, 1941, for wage increases. 9/ The other involved 14,300 motor vehicle factory workers in Windsor during November 24 to December 1, 1942, in a demand for "equal pay for equal work" for women. The strike ended by agreement to arbitrate. This was the first of several disputes to affect the Ford Company of Canada operations in Windsor, culminating in the major shutdown that came shortly after the war's end. A brief strike of 15,000 auto workers in Windsor during April 22 to 25, 1943, was in protest against an alleged "speedup" order by management, as well as the suspension of certain workers. It, too, was settled by arbitration. 10/

Another strike of 13,346 automobile workers occurred in Windsor during April 20 to May 14, 1944. It developed out of a difference in the union's and company's interpretations of proper grievance procedure for settling disputes. Indicative of unrest and disturbed labour relations in the firm was the manner in which this dispute escalated into a large, and by wartime standards, prolonged shutdown. It began by the company's assertion that union shop stewards were violating agreed-upon procedure in handling a dispute and four stewards were suspended for "misconduct." The union called a meeting of all employees on April 20, which the company interpreted as an illegal stoppage of work. It thereby terminated its existing agreement with the union. The matter was referred to the National War Labour Board which presented a grievance procedure that the union rejected. Finally, in May, the Board insisted that the men return to work pending further clarification. 11/

Two major strikes during 1943, in steel and in coal, presented a direct challenge to the federal government's official policies regarding wage and

price control and disputes settlement procedure. In the process there appeared to be considerable inconsistency in government policy, which generated some bitterness and conflict among government agencies and personnel dealing with labour matters.

The first virtually industry-wide strike in the steel industry of Canada occurred during January 12 to February 1, 1943, involving some 11,660 employees in steel operations in Nova Scotia as well as in Ontario. The strike developed after locals of the United Steel Workers, which were demanding wage increases to a basic minimum of 55 cents an hour, rejected the findings of their respective Regional War Labour Boards recommending against such increases. After protracted negotiations and intercessions by the federal government, at the union's request a Royal Commission was appointed to consider the dispute. The majority report of this body agreed with the previous findings of the regional war labour boards in recommending against any wage increases, while the minority report upheld the union's demands. The strike was finally settled, after a two-and-a-half-week shutdown, by meeting the union's demands for a 55 cent minimum. 12/

The steel shutdown and subsequent wage increase that was granted, counter to official wage-price policy, triggered a number of smaller strikes in other industries during the year. The report of the National War Labour Board (NWLB) later that year stated that "we have watched carefully and with a considerable degree of alarm the spread of wages resulting from the breakthrough in steel." 13/ This body, by inference, blamed a large strike of some 9,000 coal miners in Alberta and British Columbia during November 1 to 12, 1943 on the precedent established in steel. This strike, the first district-wide shutdown in the coal industry of Canada for almost two decades,

arose out of the men's demands for increased wages, time-and-a-half for the sixth working day each week, and two weeks vacation with pay. As with the steel strike, it was referred to a special Royal Commission which achieved a settlement on the basis of a modified wage increase and the two weeks vacation demanded. 14/ The above mentioned NWLB report concluded somewhat bitterly that:

The demands on which District 18 of the United Mine Workers of America called this strike were never at any time before this Board. Evidently the Union Executive decided as a matter of policy that direct and illegal strike action was the way to achieve its ends, rather than take the risk of justifying them under existing wage legislation before this Board. It appears as if this plan has succeeded. The result has not enhanced this Board's prestige. 15/

The largest single walkout of any one year since 1919 occurred when an estimated 21,131 aircraft workers in Montreal went on strike from August 3 to 16, 1943, in a demand that the full cost of living bonus on their wages be made retroactive to July 1, 1942. The strike was not ended until representatives of the National War Labour Board, the Department of Labour and the Department of Munitions and Supply had all interceded. 16/

Another large strike of aircraft workers involved some 6,739 employees in Vancouver during April 28 to May 4, in a demand for 10-minute rest periods for each shift. The men alleged that they were locked out by the company after submitting this demand. 17/

Among other large but relatively brief strikes during 1943 was one involving 7,000 shipyard workers in Quebec City and Lauzon, Quebec, from June 15 to 28, and one involving 4,000 street railway employees in Montreal during August 3 to 13, in the same year. 18/

Coal Mining

Coal mining continued to account for a disproportionate share of labour trouble during the later 1930's and World War II though, because of the rapid growth of trade unionism in other industries, relatively speaking it did not dominate the scene to the same extent as in earlier decades. Labour and other problems in coal mining during the war created the threat of critical shortages of coal and brought forth a series of special studies and extraordinary decrees from the government.

The United Mine Workers of America, which had virtually disintegrated during the later 1920's and the worst years of the depression, revived strongly during the later 1930's. It became re-established, for the first time in many years, in District 18, covering eastern British Columbia and western Alberta, and in District 26, encompassing Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. A rising incidence of overt industrial conflict accompanied this recovery. In the peak year of 1937 strikes in coal mining reached new levels in terms of relative frequency and numbers of workers involved, though not in man-days lost. The vast majority of strikes were small and brief "protest" or "wildcat" walkouts over a wide variety of issues. Of the 44 that occurred in 1937, only four involved more than 1,000 workers and these lasted only a few days. Apparently grievances that had accumulated among coal mine workers, and which they had accepted more or less quietly during periods of depression and unemployment, broke loose in a flurry of strikes in periods of recovery, rising employment and union growth.

Strikes in coal mining fell sharply again, to their lowest level for many years, during the recession of 1938 and limited recovery of 1939.

Then they rose to new peaks in 1941, and even more in 1943. In 1941 they were more numerous even than in 1937, involved more than twice as many workers, and brought about an equal time loss in total man-days. 19/

During 1941, furthermore, there were deliberate "slow-downs" or restrictions of output by coal miners in Cape Breton and in New Brunswick in attempts to achieve higher wages. Dosco and other operators responded by numerous suspensions and dismissals. The Canadian Labour Congress officially deplored slowdowns as a labour tactic in wartime and called upon the federal government to "intervene and settle these production disputes." 20/ The International President of the UMWA, John L. Lewis, also attempted, with limited success, to end the slowdowns in the Maritimes. 21/

Strikes in coal mining in Canada generally fell off sharply in 1942, but labour and production problems continued to plague the industry. Finally, the Emergency Coal Production Board was established in December of that year in an attempt to overcome a threatened crisis in coal supplies for 1943. Coal production, it was pointed out, had increased substantially since the outbreak of the war. Output had averaged 15 million tons a year prior to the war and had reached 18.2 million during 1941. Consumption, however, had increased far more, from 27 million tons to 40 million. "Up to the mid-summer of 1942 production continued to increase," according to an official report, "but in recent months the rate of production has begun to slip, and unless remedial measures are effected production in 1943 will fall to 16 million tons and perhaps even less." 22/ The decline was attributed largely to labour leaving the coal mines in large numbers, some workers going into other industries and others going into the Armed Forces. These were largely from the ranks of younger workers, and with the increasing age of the coal labour force, output per man tended to decline. 23/

In the face of these dangers, Parliament in June 1943, passed an emergency Order-in-Council "freezing" coal miners to their jobs and providing for compulsory transference of coal miners from other industries back to the mines. 24/

Despite these emergency measures, or perhaps because of them, in view of the unsatisfactory labour conditions in coal mining which the necessity for such measures reflected, during 1943 strikes reached by far the largest in number (111) in the entire history of the industry in Canada, and the number of workers involved (59,017) was well over double the average for several years previously. 25/ By far the majority of these, as in previous years, comprised relatively small and brief "protest" or "wildcat" strikes in a pattern similar to that of 1937. One notable exception was the region-wide strike mentioned earlier, of 9,850 coal miners in District 18, from November 1 to 15, 1943, in a demand for higher wages, time-and-a-half for the sixth working day each week, and two weeks vacation with pay. As noted earlier this dispute, which the National War Labour Board had been unable to settle on the basis of official wartime wage formulae, was finally settled by a special Royal Commission with compromise wage increases plus the two weeks vacation.

Almost in desperation, it now seems, Parliament on October 14, 1943, passed emergency Order-in-Council P.C. 8021 prohibiting strikes and lockouts in coal mining for the duration of the war. This was revoked a few weeks later, in December, when the Wartime Wage Control Order, P.C. 9384 was passed, providing for severe penalties for strikes in violation of wartime regulations. 26/

Strikes were not the only manifestation of labour unrest in the coal mines, nor, as noted, were they the main labour problem accounting for lagging output. The Report of the Royal Commission on Coal appointed in 1944 found, for instance, that absenteeism among miners employed by Dosco increased from the already high figure of 19% in 1943 to 28% in the first nine months of 1946. Thus, in contrast to other coal districts in Canada, productivity fell in Nova Scotia from 2.34 to 1.58 net tons per man day, from 1939 to 1945. 27/

Strikes fell off sharply in number and average size during 1944, and rose again during 1945 and 1946, though not to any such level of frequency as in 1943. In man days lost, however, strikes in 1945 reached a higher level than in any year since the 1920's.

In 1944, as noted, a special Royal Commission on Coal was appointed to investigate "all relevant aspects and problems of the industry across the country." 28/ Its Report, a comprehensive and detailed 633-page study, was not finally tabled in Parliament until January 31, 1947. In discussing the special labour problems of the industry the Report in its opening pages commented as follows:

....The long and troubled history of collective organization of mine workers in Canada affects present labour-management relationships. Members of the UMWA face current issues conscious of the struggles and dissensions which have endangered their union in the past. Management remembers by what steps the union grew. Contract negotiations and daily relations alike are influenced by the past. 29/

General

Canada's record of economic planning during World War II was in many

respects one of the most exemplary of any nation's. Quite in contrast to its sorry performance during the 1930's, the federal government, under war-time emergency powers, showed boldness and initiative in undertaking various measures of fiscal and monetary policy, wage and price controls, rationing and allocation of goods and services in critical supply, manpower mobilization and allocation of labour, and other measures designed to maximize output and control inflation.

On the other hand, the federal government's performance in the industrial relations sector during the first four years of the war appeared to be one of weakness, indecision and absence of planning and foresight. The result was a rising tide of labour unrest and strikes, particularly in industries of critical wartime importance such as coal, steel, aluminum, automobiles and other vehicles, aircraft, and shipyards, as well as in hundreds of small plants supplying vital parts and supplies for these major industries. It was a reflection of a basic conservatism and obsolescence in thinking, an apparent inability or unwillingness on the part of employers and governments alike to assess and make adequate provisions for the industrial relations sector to the same extent as in the monetary and fiscal, foreign trade, and other key sectors of the economy. The government for several years was trying to get by with an outmoded and, in the views of many in organized labour circles, unfair and discredited policy as exemplified mainly in the IDIA, while at the same time imposing new restrictions on workers' freedom to seek higher wages or to change jobs.

Understandably, this trend in policy was unacceptable to large groups of workers. During the depression a few years earlier, and even in the early years of the war in some areas, employers had had virtually a free

hand to cut wages, discriminate against union members and refuse to recognize and bargain collectively with unions, while enjoying protection from police in recruiting strike-breakers when faced with organized labour resistance. A persistently high rate of unemployment gave employers a decided advantage in bargaining power until well on in the war.

By late 1941 wartime expansion was bringing the Canadian economy to a level of full employment and labour shortages for the first time in several decades. Despite their unfavourable legal position, this was giving unions in many industries a bargaining power equal to or greater than that of employers, and thus providing a chance to catch up on previous lags and losses. But hardly had this stage been reached when the emergency wartime powers of government were used to put limits on wage increases and other gains and new restrictions on the right to strike, without providing compensating protection of unions against employer attacks. Hence the mounting opposition from organized labour, as manifested in the record number of strikes in 1943.

As another index of widespread unrest and dissatisfaction, the socialist Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) barely missed coming to power in the 1943 provincial election in traditionally conservative Ontario. A cross-Canada public opinion poll of voter preferences later that year showed that the CCF temporarily enjoyed a larger popular following than either of the traditional "old parties."

In brief, while the government in Canada, as compared to the United States, during 1939-43 provided far less protection to unions and less status to collective bargaining as an accepted procedure in labour-management relations, at the same time it imposed more restrictions on

workers' rights to strike, or even to quit their jobs, and more limits on wage increases than were applied in the United States. Government and employers alike in Canada seemed to be, in effect, attempting to "eat their cake and have it too." The result was organized revolt on a greater scale, comparatively, than in the traditionally more turbulent and "strike-prone" United States, which entered into the war more than two years after Canada had.

This general situation forced the government, reluctantly, to take more effective action, counter in some important respects to its previous predilections in policy. Belatedly, after an exhaustive public enquiry by the National War Labour Board during 1943, a new "blanket" Order-in-Council, P.C. 1003, was passed in January 1944. This statute superseded previous legislation, including the IDIA and supplementary wartime orders-in-council, and brought the national labour code more into line with the United States pattern. It included the main principles of the Wagner Act concerning protection of workers' rights to organize, certification of bargaining units and compulsory collective bargaining, together with similar machinery to enforce such principles. At the same time it retained, in amended form, the main procedures derived from the IDIA for preventing or settling disputes, that is, compulsory two-stage conciliation of disputes and compulsory delay of strikes or lockouts pending investigation.

The new statute brought a sharp reduction in the incidence of strikes for the duration of the war. During 1944-45 the numbers of strikes and man-days lost were less than one-half, and of strikers less than one-third, of the 1943 level.

There were no large strikes of any consequence, aside from a few large but brief "wildcats" as in the Ford Company operations in Windsor, until the end of the war.

POSTWAR READJUSTMENT AND INFLATION: 1945-50

Industrial relations generally in the five years immediately following World War II were superficially similar to those following World War I. Union membership had grown rapidly during and immediately after both wars and reached record numbers. Strikes, likewise, reached an all-time high in frequency, size and time loss in 1946, as in 1919. In 1947 they were even larger in number though far smaller in workers involved and time loss than in 1946, but still far larger in these latter respects than in most years up to then—again a pattern similar to 1920. Following this two-year peak there was a sharp decline in the incidence of strikes, in all three respects, for several years. 16

Alan sky
P. diamond
right
A widely accepted explanation was applied to both periods of peak conflict, 1919-20 and 1946-47. There were the restrictions, inhibitions and bottled-up frustrations imposed during the war, as well as the hostility and combativeness generated by wartime conditions. There was also the widespread suspicion, in labour circles, of wartime "profiteering" and of an uneven distribution of the war's financial burdens as between labour and capital. And, most specific and perhaps most important, there was the growing pressure on unions to resume their main function of bargaining for higher wage and hour standards as against the controls imposed on these during wartime. As a House of Commons Report on "Causes of Industrial Unrest in Canada" stated: "The lid had been held on for six years and was bound

to blow off." 30/ The Report also stressed union security as a major demand in the postwar wave of strikes.

In a number of other important respects, however, the general economic climate, and the industrial relations patterns, were markedly different in the two periods. During and immediately after World War I there had been continuous and rapid inflation of prices, reaching a peak in 1920, coupled with an absence of effective measures to distribute the burdens of the war equitably. Furthermore, the haphazard and unplanned demobilization of returned soldiers generated serious problems of displacement and unemployment in some areas. These, as noted earlier, were some of the main problems generating mounting labour unrest and conflict in the late war and immediate postwar years. In the World War II era, by comparison, inflation had been limited during and immediately after the end of hostilities and effective rationing of scarce necessities was maintained. The peak period of postwar inflation came during 1948 and early 1949, after the peak of labour unrest and strikes had passed. A general slowdown developed in the economy, and prices levelled off during late 1949 and early 1950. This was followed by a new brief burst of inflation and rapid expansion with the outbreak of war in Korea.

Unrest and conflict were mitigated to a considerable extent during the later 1940's, and strikes declined sharply from 1946-47 level despite the inflation, due mainly perhaps to the widespread acceptance, in union agreements, of automatic wage increases geared to the cost of living index after substantial gains had already been achieved during 1946-47.

Again, the years immediately following World War II differed from 1919-20 in the notable absence of hysterical reactions and violent repression

from governments and employers, despite the record wave of strikes. The strikes, again in contrast to the previous period, were with few exceptions orderly and peaceful, lacking the turbulence and mob action, legal and extra-legal violence, property damage and arrests that had characterized so many disputes in the decades preceding World War II.

Underlying this change was the fact that unions, in the major industries and firms in which they were organized under new federal and provincial legislation, had finally achieved a secure legal status, at least as regards the right to organize, recognition and collective bargaining. Employers, whether by legal necessity or choice, had come to terms with unions representative of their employees and to a large extent had abandoned the more overt and provocative anti-union tactics. And, in a situation of rapid reconversion from a wartime to peacetime economy, rapid economic growth and minimum unemployment, few large employers attempted to man their plants with strike-breakers during shutdowns. Most of the large and prolonged strikes that accounted for the overwhelming share of total time loss during 1946-47 were carried out for specific and tangible objectives, and then only after protracted and comparatively rational negotiation and complicated conciliation proceedings required by law. Few of them could be viewed as desperate struggles for survival.

The following table 31/ lists the 19 major strikes, each involving more than 2,500 workers and/or more than 100,000 man-days of employment lost during 1945-49 inclusive. It shows the industries and provinces in which these strikes occurred, and dates of beginning and termination, as well as workers involved and time lost.

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Province</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Workers Involved</u>	<u>Man Days Lost</u>
Logging and Lumber	B.C.	1946 May 15-June 26	38,000	600,000
	Ontario	1946 Oct. 11-Nov. 4	6,000	50,000
Metal mining Asbestos mining	B.C.	1946 July 3-Nov. 11	2,070	149,000
	Quebec	1949 Feb. 14-July 4	4,650	494,000
Coal Mining	Alberta	1946 June 26-June 27	6,500	6,500
	N.S. and	1947 Jan. 31-Feb. 4	14,500	30,750
	N.B.	Feb. 15-May 26	14,919	1,121,000
		May 28-June 11	14,167	160,000
	Alberta and B.C.	1948 Jan. 13-July 31	9,000	289,000
Motor Vehicles and Parts	Ontario	1945 Sep. 12-Dec. 29	17,000	1,070,000
	"	1946 June 8-Oct. 21	3,440	267,000
	"	1948 July 4-Nov. 1	2,589	163,000
	"	1949 Oct. 21-Nov. 22	5,400	102,000
Rubber	"	1946 June 23-Oct. 28	10,146	800,000
Electrical Products	"	1946 July 5-Nov. 1	6,271	432,000
Steel	Ontario and N.S.	1946 July 14-Oct. 3	12,496	700,000
Textiles	Quebec	1946 June 1-Sept. 9	5,253	321,500
	"	1947 Nov. 3-Nov. 11	6,020	40,000
Meat Packing	All Provs.	1947 Aug. 27-Oct. 24	13,769	461,500
Shipping (Seamen)	Ontario & Quebec	1946 May 24-June 22	2,500	50,000
Street Railways	B.C.	1947 Oct. 20-Nov. 18	2,873	64,000

The largest strikes, accounting for most of the time loss during the period 1946-51, centred on demands for wage increases and/or shorter hours for the same or higher weekly take-home pay. Starting with the unprecedented industry-wide lumber strike in British Columbia during the summer of 1946, there was a more or less concerted campaign among unions in a number of major industries to break out of the structure of wartime controls and establish new and higher wage and hour standards. The Wartime Emergency Powers of the federal government, however, did not officially end until late 1947, and the continuation of price control and rationing of scarce materials and equipment stiffened employer resistance to union demands. Hence the unprecedented size and duration of numerous strikes in this period. The larger strikes of 1946 and early 1947 in such industries as lumber in British Columbia and Ontario, metal mining in British Columbia, rubber, automobile and electrical appliance workers in Ontario, steel workers in Ontario and Nova Scotia, coal miners in the Maritimes, and packing house workers across Canada, created new breakthroughs and "patterns" in wages and hours. These, in turn, had a "demonstration effect" upon workers in many more, and smaller, plants and firms in other industries and regions. Hence, in 1947, while the number of strikes over Canada as a whole (i.e., 236) exceeded even that of 1946 (i.e., 228), the former involved a total of one-third fewer workers and less than one-half total man-days lost as compared to the previous year. 32/

The few large and protracted strikes that occurred during late 1947 to 1950, inclusive, likewise focused on wage and hour demands. These represented, for the most part, workers in industries in which wage and hour standards had lagged considerably behind the "pattern setters" of 1946 and

early 1947, which were mainly in the "heavy" industries. Notable among the former category were strikes of textile and shoe factory workers in Quebec and of street railwaymen in Vancouver, British Columbia in late 1947; furniture workers in 1948 and asbestos workers in 1949, both in Quebec; and, in 1950, by far the most important of all, the nation-wide strike of railway workers, on both transcontinental lines, for the first time in Canadian history.

In a few of the larger and more protracted strikes, union security, more specifically the closed shop or, more often, the union shop with check-off, was the main issue. This was notably the case in the protracted shut-down of some 17,000 automobile workers in Windsor, from September 12 to December 29, 1945. 33/

Union security, in the more general sense, may also have been a dominant motif in a number of major strikes in which wages or hours were ostensibly the central issue. The federal labour statute P.C. 1003, of early 1944, gave unions new protection against overt discrimination and attack by employers, and required the latter to bargain collectively with certified representative organizations of their employees. In this respect it gave the trade union movement a new sense of security, comparable to that of the Wagner Act of 1935 in the United States, and encouraged a long-delayed spurt in growth in Canada during the latter years of the war and the immediate postwar period comparable to that in the United States during the later 1930's. By 1950 unions in Canada, for the first time in almost two decades, had achieved parity with the United States as regards the percentage of non-agricultural paid workers that was organized.

✓ P.C. 1003, however, was an order-in-council passed by the federal government using its emergency wartime powers to extend its jurisdiction into areas constitutionally assigned to the various provinces. This fact kept organized labour in Canada in a state of uncertainty. Whenever Parliament declared the war emergency over, which it finally did in mid-1947, P.C. 1003 would be revoked. It would have to be replaced by new Federal legislation having a much more restricted jurisdiction, while the vast bulk of labour relations matters would be returned to the provinces.

✓ Several provinces enacted new labour relations legislation late in the war, or a few years after, in preparation for this change. But there was no certainty that the new federal and provincial statutes would be as favourable to organized labour as P.C. 1003 was. Indeed, in view of the widespread agitation among various groups of employers and others for new and more drastic curbs on unions in a general atmosphere of postwar reaction, albeit far less extreme than after World War I, it seemed likely that peacetime legislation would be less favourable. Unions in a number of major industries, therefore, leadership and rank-and-file alike, had a strong incentive to "get what they could while the getting is good" in view of the uncertainties ahead. The widespread expectation, in labour circles, of a serious postwar slump and unemployment, such as had followed World War I, provided an additional stimulus to action.

✓ In brief, the unprecedented wave of large and protracted strikes of 1946-47, and most of those that followed with much less frequency during 1948-50, developed in large part out of a more or less concerted campaign among the larger unions to establish a new and more secure base on which to build in the postwar era. They sought a new and improved status and a

wider scope for organization and collective bargaining, as well as higher standards of wages, hours and working conditions.

In this connection, one outstanding feature of the postwar campaign, accounting in part for the unusual size and duration of some of the strikes that ensued, was the attempt by numerous unions to establish collective bargaining on an industry-wide scale. Hitherto it had been largely on local, competitive, company-by-company bases. Multi-employer or industry-wide bargaining had been confined to a few industries, and these were mostly local or district-wide in scope, as in building and service trades, clothing, printing and coal mining. A number of major strikes in the immediate postwar period, encouraged in part by the nation-wide conciliation procedures established under P.C. 1003, were in support of industry-wide standards on a regional or national scale. Such were the major shutdowns in such fields as lumber and metal mining in British Columbia, steel, in both Ontario and Nova Scotia, and meat packing across Canada, as well as the protracted strike of printers in several provinces against newspapers in the Southam Publishing Company's "chain".

Strikes and lockouts developed on the scale they did, in large part, from stiffened employer resistance to the challenge that this union campaign presented to the traditional authority, prerogatives and procedures of management. In brief, the larger and more prolonged strikes of the immediate postwar period represented major "tests of strength" between unions and employers in industries in which, for the most part, unionism and collective bargaining on a significant scale were relatively new and unfamiliar phenomena.

SPECIAL CASES

In view of the factors outlined above—particularly as compared to previous decades, the relative absence of violence and illegality, and of forceful intervention by police or military forces—it is difficult to determine to what extent the strikes of the immediate postwar period were the result of labour unrest, even in the broadest sense of the term. In many if not most instances they appear to have been merely a tactic, or bargaining device, in a more or less calculated and rational pursuit by union members and their leaders of tangible objectives such as higher wages, shorter hours, higher fringe benefits, better working conditions, and greater union security. Hence, a lengthy and detailed account of the events surrounding individual strikes, as portrayed in preceding chapters, would seem out of place in attempting to analyze industrial relations in the later 1940's.

✓ A few individual cases, however, do stand out, notably the strikes of motor vehicle workers in Windsor, Ontario, coal miners in the Maritimes, printers employed in various Southam newspapers, seamen in Great Lakes and deep sea shipping, asbestos miners in Quebec, and meat packing and railway workers across Canada. Some of these exhibited a carryover from the pre-war era of the familiar pattern of reactionary anti-union employers, violent and illegal tactics by union members, and arbitrary and discriminatory use of police forces to break strikes. Some, notably the nation-wide strikes of newspaper printers, packinghouse workers and railway employees, while lacking these violent overtones, are of special interest as regards the conflicts and dilemmas they brought out in government policy.

Coal Mining

Coal mining, which had dominated the strike scene in Canada to a disproportionate degree for so many decades, accounted for a sharply decreased incidence of walkouts after World War II. This trend reflected the secular decline in output, sales and employment in the industry as it faced mounting competition from other sources of fuel and power and, in some areas, notably in the Maritimes and Vancouver Island, depletion of resources and rising costs. It continued to experience an inordinate, but declining, number of brief "wildcats". The last large strike in the industry that was at all comparable to the pre-war scale of conflict was one, or a series of three, involving some 14,000 to 15,000 miners in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick during early 1947. It lacked the bitterness and violence of the earlier conflicts, but still indicated the special communication and other labour relations problems of coal mining in the Maritimes.

The shutdown began with a brief walkout of an estimated 14,500 miners from January 31 to February 4, 1947, in a demand for a new district-wide agreement that would provide substantial wage increases and other benefits. The miners were persuaded to return to work pending submission of the official report and recommendations of the Industrial Disputes Inquiry Board that had been dealing with the dispute. A new and much more protracted walkout developed a week later, lasting from February 15 to May 26, and was settled only after long drawn out negotiations and conciliation proceedings. Barely had this walkout ended when another strike broke out on May 28, on the charge that the operators were violating various terms of the agreement that had been negotiated to end the main strike. This third walkout ended within two days. 34/

Meat Packing

The strike involving almost 14,000 meat packinghouse workers directly and another 2,077 indirectly during August 22 to October 24, 1947, brought out sharply the conflicts and inadequacies of divided federal and provincial jurisdiction over labour matters. It was the first nation-wide strike in a major industry other than railways. The strike began in British Columbia late in August and quickly spread to all nine provinces.

Although the meat packing industry had not been brought under P.C. 1003, the Dominion Wartime Labour Relations Regulations, the Minister of Labour had used emergency wartime powers to forestall strikes in the industry in 1944, 1945 and 1946. These had merely delayed a showdown that appeared inevitable. In 1945 the Minister appointed a controller and seven deputy controllers to take charge of 18 large packing plants across the country and prevent a strike taking place while the Industrial Disputes Inquiry Commissioner was holding hearings and meetings to settle a dispute.

Jurisdiction of the federal Department of Labour over meatpacking and other industries deemed critical to the war effort lapsed on May 15, 1947, and returned to the provinces.

Representatives of all the provincial governments except British Columbia met on September 26, 1947, in Toronto to seek means for terminating the strike that had begun in late August, but were unable to agree on a common approach. The government of Prince Edward Island, acting on its own, put a controller in charge of the Canada Packers Ltd. plant in Charlottetown and actively recruited workers to replace the strikers. In other provinces the strike continued until agreements were reached individually with the major concerns involved. Swift Canadian Ltd. settled with

the union on October 18, and work resumed at all the plants of the company on October 21. Later agreements were reached with Canada Packers and with P. Burns & Co. on October 27, and the workers returned to their jobs after both parties agreed to submit some unsettled issues to binding arbitration. 35/

The International Typographical Union and the
Southam Newspaper Chain, 1946-1949 36/

The protracted strike, or series of strikes, of some 300 printers against various newspapers in the Southam Publishing Company's "chain" lasted almost four years—from December 29, 1946 until November 5, 1949. It was one of the longest strikes in Canadian history. It arose out of substantial and at times confusing changes in union bargaining policy which the Southam Company and other newspaper publishers resisted. It involved union locals and employing companies in several provinces and exposed numerous divisions and conflicts among various unions in the publishing industry. Even more than in the strike in the meat packing industry in 1947, it also brought out some glaring confusions and contradictions in federal and provincial jurisdiction and policy in labour matters.

The origins of the conflict lay essentially in the United States, or more specifically, in certain unique and contradictory characteristics in the structure and policies of the main craft organization of newspaper employees, namely, the International Typographical Union (ITU). The prevailing system of collective bargaining, which had been established for several decades throughout most of the United States and Canada, was in one respect highly decentralized. Most agreements were negotiated between ITU locals, or "chapels", and individual newspaper employers, or local councils of these where there were two or more newspapers in a town or city.

At the same time the ITU's constitution gave the International Executive of the union an unusual degree of power over its local affiliates in some respects. A number of issues in the category of "working conditions", usually subject to collective bargaining, had long been declared non-negotiable and non-arbitrable.

This policy occasionally generated conflict within the ranks of the union as well as with local employers. During the 1930's, for instance, attempts by the ITU International Executive to make a 5-day 40-hour work week uniform in all local bargaining jurisdictions on the continent led to some opposition from Canadian locals. Newspaper printers in Winnipeg and Calgary seceded from the ITU during 1936-37 and organized an autonomous Canadian National Printing Trades Union (CNPTU). Printers in the Calgary Albertan later rejoined the ITU, as did those in both major Winnipeg newspapers, the Tribune and the Free Press, leaving only the printers in the Calgary Herald and a few other members in smaller Prairie newspapers. The new organization continued to survive, however, and was to play an important role in the strikes of 1945-49. 37/

The other feature of the ITU that was and is unique on this continent is the union's two-party system of internal government, modelled on the democratic political process. Candidates for top executive positions are identified with either the "Progressives" or the "Independents". These two "parties" put out their own papers expressing their respective platforms and policies and supporting different slates of candidates for office in the organization during elections.

The election in 1944 of a new president of the ITU supported by the "Progressive" wing, following long tenure of office by predecessors who

had been identified with the "Independents", led to a fairly drastic change in bargaining policy and to widespread conflict, in a union that had experienced relatively few strikes over a period of several decades. The main change involved an effort by the International Executive of the ITU to achieve what amounted to uniform industry-wide conditions of employment in the United States by collective bargaining on a national scale with the American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA). Failing in this effort, the union then sought to achieve the same broad objectives by other means. New standards governing such matters as hiring and firing, hours of work, pay differentials and job transfers were incorporated in the by-laws of the ITU and were, in effect, imposed on local chapters and employers and declared to be non-arbitrable. 38/

The new policy led to an unprecedented wave of strikes, in number and duration, in the newspaper industry in the United States. In a major "test case" arising out of one such strike, the National Labour Relations Board declared the union by-laws to be incompatible with free collective bargaining and stated that "...a union's refusal to bargain in good faith may remove the possibility of negotiation..." 39/

Similar conflict developed in Canada. It involved newspapers in the Southam Publishing Company's chain, together with some other publishers with whom Southam subsidiaries were associated in local bargaining agreements with the ITU. Efforts by the international and national executives to establish a system of nation-wide "chain bargaining" with the Southam Company led to a series of local disputes on a national scale, for the established policy of the company, as described by its president, was one of "a large degree of local autonomy, backed up in a democratic way by a

central organization, operating largely in an advisory capacity." 40/
In union policy it meant participation by the company's subsidiary newspapers in city-wide bargaining, with the publisher of the largest newspaper in each city acting as chairman of the publishers' committee. In Vancouver this was the Southam's Province; in Winnipeg, the Sifton's Free Press, and so on.

The conflict began in Winnipeg in September 1945 when the agreement between local ITU printers and the Free Press and Tribune lapsed. Negotiations between the parties resulted in a tentative agreement on October 27. The International Executive of the ITU, however, rejected six clauses of the agreement. Further negotiations led to a stalemate, despite intervention of the Manitoba Department of Labour. Then the local ITU moved at a meeting on November 8 to go into a "continuous session" until a satisfactory answer was received from the publishers on the matters in dispute. 41/
The provincial Minister of Labour appointed an Industrial Disputes Inquiry Commissioner to investigate the dispute and if possible arrange a settlement.

The two main points at issue were a proposed clause of the ITU for non-arbitrability of the union's general laws and the 40-hour week and payment of overtime if the union could not supply sufficient men to meet the employer's needs. 42/

The dispute remained deadlocked and the two newspaper publishers finally, on December 29, 1945, issued formal dismissal notices to the union members, who had been on strike since early November. They proceeded to recruit open-shop composing-room crews in January 1946.

The federal Deputy Minister of Labour in Ottawa next attempted to settle the dispute in a meeting with Woodruff Randolph, International President of the ITU, and Philip Fisher, President of the Southam Company. A Labour Department proposal that a Conciliation Board be appointed under terms of P.C. 1003 was rejected by the employers. The Minister of Labour then appointed another Industrial Disputes Inquiry Commissioner, this time under federal jurisdiction. The Commissioner's findings were highly critical of both parties, but especially of the union. His Report was not published, evidently for fear that it would exacerbate rather than help settle the conflict. 43/

The Winnipeg Tribune and Free Press meanwhile, were increasingly successful in recruiting strike-breakers and bringing production and circulation of their newspapers back to normal. ITU locals of Southam newspapers in other cities therefore felt called upon to act in concert with the Winnipeg local as a gesture of sympathy and to forestall what they feared might become a concerted effort on the part of all Southam divisions to oust the union. An official report of the Western Representative of the union stated:

At this time—about January, 1946, two months after the Winnipeg stoppage began—instructions were received from President Randolph that no new contracts were to be signed with either Southam or Sifton papers until a settlement was reached in Winnipeg. 44/

Strikes subsequently developed in all of the major divisions of the Southam Company during 1946—in the Vancouver Province, the Ottawa Citizen, the Hamilton Spectator and the Calgary Herald, as well as the Winnipeg Tribune and the Sifton's Free Press. In all of these the newspaper employers were able to maintain or resume operations with varying degrees of

success. In Ottawa, for example, the publisher used matter composed in non-union shops in the vicinity. The Hamilton Spectator used typewritten material which was photographed and stereotyped, as well as job-shop material. In Edmonton, the company competing with the Journal made gestures toward printing the Southam paper. When its printers refused to do this, the two newspapers published a joint edition, using volunteer machine operators from editorial staffs. 45/ In Winnipeg, Ottawa and Vancouver the struck publishers were successful in recruiting strike-breakers, though in Vancouver the main newspaper competitors did not co-operate with the Southam paper in resisting the union.

Efforts by the ITU to achieve its objectives, and to obtain government intervention to settle the strikes by changing its basis of certification, were blocked by ambiguities and conflicts in federal and provincial legislation. The Ottawa local of the ITU in May 1946 applied to the Ontario Labour Relations Board for certification as bargaining agent for printing employees of the Ottawa Citizen. The application was dismissed because it sought:

...to establish basic conditions for employment of typographers not only in the Ottawa Citizen division of the Company, but for all newspapers in the Southam group throughout the Dominion. 46/

The Ontario Board advised the union that the case was properly one which should be heard by the National Labour Relations Board. Consequently in May 1947 the union, acting under terms of P.C. 1003, the Dominion War-time Labour Relations Regulations, appeared before the National Labour Relations Board to apply for intervention by that body with a view to negotiating a master agreement with the Southam company. The NLRB rejected

this application on the grounds that the ITU would first have to have itself certified in place of its various locals, as bargaining agent on a national scale, for printers in Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Hamilton and Ottawa, as prescribed in Section 5 (2) of P.C. 1003. The ITU did not undertake to do this, however, as it faced the problem that the province of Alberta did not come under the terms of P.C. 1003. In other words, Alberta did not enforce P.C. 1003 in industries that came under provincial jurisdiction. Newspaper publishing was in this category. The drafters of P.C. 1003, except for a few vague phrases about the "appropriateness" of the size of "bargaining units", had not made provision for industries, or unions, that attempted to shift from local or regional to nation-wide bargaining. To get around this obstacle would have involved the union in further months of interminable legal wrangling and judicial procedures. 47/

The Southam Company division that experienced the most intense, bitter and prolonged strike was the Province newspaper in Vancouver, British Columbia. In this dispute particularly, the confusions between federal and provincial legislative jurisdiction, and the divisions and conflicts among various craft unions in the printing trades, came to the fore.

The agreement between Local 226 of the ITU and the Province expired on March 1, 1946, by which time strikes were already under way in other divisions of the Southam Company. Legislative provisions requiring two months' notice and ten days of negotiations were observed, in the course of which officials of the local ITU made it clear that they did not wish to negotiate a new agreement with the Province division of the Southam Company, but with the company itself, or with the Province representing all Southam divisions. No agreement being reached, the two parties met

with a provincial conciliation officer for two days. He was unsuccessful in settling the dispute. At a union meeting on June 5, 1946, union members voted 176 to 2 to go on strike. 48/

As in Ontario, efforts by the ITU to have the dispute settled on a national basis, under P.C. 1003, proved fruitless. The National Labour Relations Board decided, a little more than a week after the strike began, that locals of the ITU could bargain only with local divisions of the Southam Company. 49/

The provincial Department of Labour was faced with an apparently hopeless deadlock. Conciliation under its auspices having proven fruitless, it recommended to Ottawa that a federal Conciliation Board be appointed under P.C. 1003. This the federal Minister of Labour refused to do on the grounds that "...a Conciliation Board should not be established under P.C. 1003 while a strike was in existence in contravention of the Regulations." 50/ Instead the federal minister appointed an Industrial Disputes Inquiry Commission pursuant to provisions of P.C. 4020, another emergency wartime Order-in-Council. 51/

The Commission, in its Report, decided that: "The work stoppage in Vancouver is not of local origin, but has been caused by an issue which affects other newspapers in Canada, and is accordingly of national scope." It recommended, therefore, that the federal Minister of Labour attempt to mediate between the principal officials of the ITU and the Southam Company. 52/

Both sides settled down to a protracted struggle following this final impasse.

The Province management had prepared for this eventuality, in view of the strikes that had already occurred in other branches of the Southam chain. In contrast to the situation in other cities, however, the Province did not receive support from its competitors, the Sun and the News Herald. This strengthened the position of the local ITU which, with the support of most other labour organizations, was able to maintain an effective campaign of picketing and boycotting for almost three and one-half years. The Province, while able to resume operations on a more limited scale than before, never regained its former position as the leading newspaper in British Columbia.

The Province had printers flown in from Calgary during July 12th and 15th. They were recruited by, and from, the Canadian National Printing Trades Union (CNPTU) which, as noted earlier, consisted of a small organization of a few members in Calgary which had broken away from the ITU in 1937.

The ITU in Vancouver threw up a line of pickets around the Province building on a 24-hour day schedule, reinforced by sympathizers from other unions, in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent strike-breakers of the CNPTU from going to work. Various acts of intimidation and violence were reported. 53/

The Ontario Labour Relations Board refused to certify the CNPTU as the bargaining agent for Ottawa Citizen printers, on the grounds that the union had received financial aid from the employers. 54/ A similar application by CNPTU printers employed in the Province was likewise rejected by the British Columbia Labour Relations Board but no official explanation was given. 55/

On July 15 the British Columbia Supreme Court issued an injunction which, in effect, banned picketing by the ITU for two weeks. Immediately sympathetic local unions supplied pickets to replace those of the ITU. Prominent among these were the International Woodworkers of America, the United Fishermen's Union, the Canadian Seamen's Union and other organizations that were under allegedly Communist leadership.

Meanwhile, efforts by the publisher to persuade the members of other printing trades unions to return to work had mixed results. The stereotypers and mailers refused to work for the Province but the printing pressmen agreed to. However, reportedly a "goon squad" of IWA and CSU members waylaid the pressmen at their local headquarters and "persuaded" them not to. 56/ Subsequently the International Executive of the pressmen's union ordered its members in the Province to return to work. The publisher managed to produce a few thousand copies but then the Teamsters' Union refused to handle them. Many news vendors likewise refused to handle the paper. The Pacific Tribune, local journal of the Communist Labour Progressive Party, reported: "Pickets touring Granville and Hastings streets later persuaded other vendors to hand over their papers." 57/ "Persuaded" in at least three cases meant overturned news-stands. 58/

The Province management succeeded nonetheless in increasing its output and distribution, with the help of police, against mounting opposition. On July 28 an estimated 50,000 to 60,000 copies were run off, and preparations made to ship them out for distribution, in the face of a hostile crowd of pickets estimated to number 2,000. As Scott described the situation and the events that followed:

This large crowd, encouraged by more articulate pickets, none of whom belonged to the ITU, actively prevented the egress of trucks from the Province delivery portal. A very disorderly series of skirmishes resulted from successive attempts of trucks to leave, and eight men were arrested by the twenty-five or thirty police men by the time the day was over. The Teamsters' Union refused to battle the picket line. Members of the Longshoremen's and Street Railwaymen's unions also refused to assist in the distribution of the paper.

However the newspaper was published again on Wednesday, July 24 without union truck drivers, but with the assistance of a convoy of police cars which accompanied an 'assembly' of trucks. From that time on production was gradually increased. The ITU pickets reappeared when the injunction was modified on July 20th. Union truckers again agreed to handle the Province contract on August 7th. (Union drivers returned to work on direct instructions from Dave Beck, Regional President of the Teamsters' Union in Seattle.) Longshoremen for various shipping companies agreed in August to handle the papers. 59/

Subsequently other unions besides the Pressmen's, Longshoremen's and Teamsters' agreed to handle Province work. These included the Photo-Engravers, the Carpenters, the Plumbers and the Painters. In the other cities, all unions except the ITU were reported to be again working for the Southam papers by late 1946. Only in Vancouver, where the Street Railwaymen's, Stereotypers', Mailers' and a number of smaller unions refused to handle the Province, was there still effective large-scale labour opposition. 60/

The strike dragged on for almost three years after the developments outlined above. The main effectiveness of the continuous picketing by the ITU lay in encouraging and maintaining a large-scale boycott against the Province. This was supported by most unions in British Columbia, whether affiliated with the Trades and Labour Congress or the Canadian Congress of Labour. It was effective in reducing the Province circulation from an estimated 140,000 to 150,000 down to about 80,000. The ITU at the same

time put out a bi-weekly publication of its own, the Typo Times, which provided an effective counter-weapon to the Province for information and propaganda about the strike.

The Province, on its part, was able to continue operating profitably despite its reduced circulation and the failure of its competitors to support its struggle. Newsprint was in short supply during the latter 1940's. This limited the output of its competitors, and particularly the amount of advertising space they could sell. The Province faced no such restrictions.

Finally, on November 5, 1949, after 41 months on strike, the ITU and the Province management reached a mutually satisfactory agreement that ended the longest deadlock in British Columbia's labour history. The ITU and the central labour councils of the TLC and CCL in British Columbia declared the Province "fair to organized labour" and called for an end to the protracted boycott. 61/

Motor Vehicles

The strike involving some 17,000 motor vehicle workers in Windsor, Ontario, during September 12 to December 29, 1945, was the first and one of the most highly publicized in the postwar wave of large and protracted shutdowns.

Labour unrest and disturbed union-management relations had been evident in the Ford operations at Windsor for several years, as had been made apparent by the number of large wildcat strikes during the war. One major source of dissatisfaction was that the terms of the union agreement in force in Ford of Canada were far less favourable to the workers than in the

unusually liberal agreement which the parent company had signed with the UAW in the United States in 1940. Unlike most other major postwar strikes, the main issues in the Windsor dispute were the union's demands for a union shop with check-off, and for new grievance procedures. The company opposed these demands, largely on grounds of "irresponsibility" of the union, which was allegedly under left-wing leadership at the time.

The bitterness between the two parties to the strike became apparent in the tactics employed and the escalating conflict that developed. Union pickets refused to permit more than five security guards to enter the company premises on each shift and supervisory employees were allegedly harassed in trying to preserve essential maintenance. The Windsor Police Commission, consequently, on November 2 ordered the intervention of city police to protect non-striking employees as well as the property of the company. A strongly reinforced picket line, however, prevented the local police from escorting security guards into the plant. The Attorney General of Ontario was then requested to supply reinforcements to assist in the maintenance of law and order. A considerable detachment of Ontario provincial police, supplemented by the RCMP, was then dispatched to Windsor. The strikers responded by throwing up a barricade of cars around the struck plant. On November 5, 8,500 workers in other automobile, aircraft and agricultural implement plants joined the Ford workers in a sympathy strike, which ended November 30.

The Ford strike itself did not end until December 29, when both parties agreed to submit the dispute to binding arbitration. In his famous arbitration award, Mr. Justice Rand of the Ontario Supreme Court ruled against the demand for the union shop but in favour of a check-off of union dues

from all bona fide employees whether or not they were union members. This was the essence of the well-known "Rand formula." 62/

Shipping

The Canadian Seamen's Union had become established in Great Lakes Shipping in a series of successful strikes in 1937, under the leadership of Pat Sullivan. In his lengthy and very partisan account, Red Sails on the Great Lakes, Sullivan went into great detail concerning the intricate manoeuvres and undercover deals by which he and his union came under the control of the Communist Party.

The Strike of 1946

The seamen's strike of 1946, according to Sullivan, was deliberately provoked as part of the new "get tough" line of the Communist Labour Progressive Party, with the incidental purpose of disrupting shipments of food-stuffs to Europe. According to his version:

In the ten years that I had led the seamen we had some bitter and bloody strikes—but never anything like this one...of the CSU. There were many instances of violence breaking out during the strike, and clashes with the police were frequent. These were what might be called routine clashes, often provoked by some hot-head who wanted to show off or perhaps had been instructed by some party member in the background to do something dramatic. Feeling was bitter, too bitter for an orderly strike, and the continual agitation by the communists made it difficult to keep the strikers in hand. 63/

There were individual cases of what Sullivan called "wanton brutality" when "goon squads" of the Canadian Seamen's Union (CSU) beat up certain selected individuals badly enough to cause serious injuries requiring hospital treatment. 64/

The seamen succeeded in winning the main objective of the strike—i.e., an eight-hour day and three-watch system in place of two twelve-hour watches. They also achieved recognition and sole bargaining rights on the main vessels in the Great Lakes and deep sea shipping, in the face of the employers' refusal to negotiate with the CSU. 65/

Sullivan concluded:

When the smoke of battle cleared, the Canadian Seamen's Union had once again chalked up tremendous gains...though dozens of seamen were in the jails, or out on bail awaiting trial for violence during the strike. 66/

The federal government handled the strike by using its wartime emergency powers to issue a special Order-in-Council, P.C. 2556 of June 20, 1946. It provided for the appointment of a controller to take over and carry on operations of the 29 Lake Shipping companies affected by the stoppage, and it required all seamen in the employ of the companies immediately before the strike to resume work. An order of the National War Labour Board on the following day required the companies to institute the three-watch, eight-hour day system, the main issue in the strike, in place of the prevailing twelve-hour watch. 67/

Sullivan, in his highly coloured account, put the entire blame for the violence of the 1946 strike on the nefarious doings of the Communist Party and its infiltrators in the CSU. This was far from the whole story, however, as brought out in the well-publicized Hearings and Report by the Royal Commission under Mr. Justice T.G. Norris in 1963. Most of the subsequent disorder and violence in the shipping industry, continuing for almost two decades, was attributed largely to illegal tactics employed by major ship

owners, and by other unions and union leaders, as well as some dubious steps taken by the federal government itself, in their successful campaign to dislodge the CSU from control.

Subsequent developments during the later 1940's and early 1950's are portrayed in the "Early History" presented in the Norris Report. The following summary account is derived largely from this source. 68/

Canadian Seamens' Union (CSU), and
Seafarers' International Union (SIU)

The American Federation of Labour in its convention of 1944 had declared the CSU to be a "dual" organization, conflicting in jurisdiction with the AFL-Seafarers' International Union, though the latter had only some 300 members in Canada at that time, all in British Columbia. Pressure on the Trades and Labour Congress by some prominent Canadian officials of AFL international unions to expel the CSU and accept the SIU for affiliation led to bitter internal struggles during 1945-47.

In March 1947, Pat Sullivan resigned as President of the CSU, denouncing it as "Communist-dominated" and organized a new body, the Canadian Lake Seamen's Union (CLSU). The CSU met growing difficulties in negotiating new agreements with major shipping companies on the Great Lakes during 1947 and 1948. The companies flouted the law in unilaterally ending their agreements with the CSU and, despite overwhelming support for the union in a referendum vote, refusing to recognize it on the grounds that it was "Communist-dominated". Meetings of a duly appointed conciliation board were ignored. The companies made an agreement, instead, with the CLSU. Canada Steamship Lines, a subsidiary of the CNR, "went along" with this policy.

When navigation opened on the Great Lakes in 1948 the CSU made a determined effort to prevent the sailing of vessels manned by members of the rival CLSU. Violence occurred along the Welland Canal, at Goderich and other points, and numerous seamen were arrested. On June 5 the CSU declared a strike in an attempt to force the recalcitrant companies to renew their collective agreements, but they were able to continue operating with CLSU crews.

Sullivan was forced out of the CLSU in August 1948 and it was then merged with the SIU to become the "Canadian District" of the latter. The new organization then took over as bargaining agent with the leading steamship companies, which had previously repudiated the CSU.

The CSU became involved in another dispute during late 1948 and early 1949, this time with 27 east coast deepsea "dry cargo" shipping companies. This dispute finally led to its downfall and demise. The union rejected a unanimous report and recommendations by a federal conciliation board for settling the dispute. The companies, including the government-owned Canadian National Steamships, then entered into an agreement with the SIU, incorporating the recommendations of the board. The CSU responded by calling a strike, first against Canadian National Steamships and later extending to virtually all Canadian deepsea shipping companies. As the Norris Report observes:

This was the beginning of a great battle between the CSU and the SIU, extending to Europe and to many ports throughout the world. Dock-workers in numerous places supported the CSU. CSU crews were replaced by crews of the SIU of North America at various ports. There was violence on both coasts of Canada and on the Great Lakes, with picketing of Canadian vessels in United States ports as well as in Canadian ports. 69/

Meanwhile, representatives of prominent trade union leaders and shipping companies, including Canada Steamship Lines, had prevailed upon the International Executive of the SIU in the United States to appoint an International Representative for Canada to provide leadership in opposition to the CSU. It was in this capacity that the notorious Hal Banks came to this country, though his rather unsavoury past and criminal record in the United States would ordinarily have barred him from entry. Shortly after his arrival he announced, on March 31, 1949, that the SIU had signed an agreement with the Shipping Federation of Canada, which represented virtually all major companies in the industry.

Subsequently, on December 7, 1950, on the application of certain companies, the Canada Labour Relations Board revoked the order of certification previously granted to the CSU on the ground that, being "Communist controlled and directed" it was "no longer within the meaning of the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act (of 1948)". 70/

Banks proved to be an effective, if ruthless, labour organizer. Under his direction the SIU soon displaced the CSU from Canada's shipping industry, aided and abetted by major shipping companies, the leaders of various major labour organizations, and the federal government. To win his campaign he brought in various "experts" from the United States, "broad shouldered boys", as he described them, as well as men skilled in public relations and allied fields. As the Norris Report noted: 71/ "Bank's history in Canada has, from the early beginnings, been a history of union strife marked by acts of violence." In the ensuing years of his reign over the SIU in Canada, the Royal Commission investigation found that there had been literally dozens of acts of violence perpetrated, at one time or another, against opponents or competitors of that organization.

Asbestos Mining in Quebec

No single labour conflict in Canada's history, with the exception of the Winnipeg General Strike, has been so thoroughly researched, analyzed and commented about, in scholarly circles at least, as the asbestos workers' strike in Quebec during 1949. The most thorough published study of any single industrial strike that has ever been undertaken in this country is La Grève de l'amiante 72/, a work of collaboration by eight authors, most of them university professors, under the editorship of Pierre-Elliott Trudeau, later federal Minister of Justice and now the Prime Minister of Canada. The account that follows is largely drawn from this source.

The first surge of new militancy on the part of the Canadian and Catholic Confederation had occurred during the later 1930's, as described earlier. It was soon "squelched" by high church leaders in various settlements they negotiated with employers and with the provincial government.

A number of major developments during and after World War II brought about substantial and permanent changes in the church's labour policy in Quebec and in the character of the Catholic Confederation. Rapid industrialization and urbanization, and improved transportation and communication, greatly increased the mobility of French Canadians and broke down much of the local isolation that hitherto had characterized many Quebec communities.

Large scale organizing campaigns by international unions in strongholds of the Catholic Confederation forced the syndicates to become more militant and effective bargaining agents for their members, and to open their ranks to other than just French-speaking and Catholic workers. New federal and provincial labour legislation provided further pressure in these directions.

Finally, the social doctrine and policy of the church in Quebec moved away from "clerical nationalism" to advocate co-operation between French-speaking and English-speaking organizations having common interests. The clergy withdrew from positions of direct control in trade unions and other secular bodies. A new group of young, technically or professionally trained and aggressive lay leaders, several of whom were graduates of the new Ecole des Sciences sociales at Université Laval, rose to top positions in the Confédération des travailleurs catholiques du Canada (CTCC) and its major affiliates shortly after the war.

The Catholic labour movement rapidly lost its separatist character in the course of these developments. Jurisdictional disputes with international unions for the time being declined in frequency and bitterness. The CTCC, supported by the CCL and to a much lesser extent by the TLC, took the lead in opposing provincial legislation that was considered dangerous to organized labour in Quebec. (Indeed, from 1950 on the Quebec Federation of Labour, an affiliate of the TLC, increasingly supported the provincial government in opposition to the Quebec Federation of Industrial Unions, an affiliate of the CCL, and to the CTCC). The CTCC, however, came into increasing disfavour in official circles. Paradoxically the Catholic Confederation, which hitherto had been an outstanding symbol of French-Canadian nationalism, now became one of the most vociferous opponents, and a major target of attack, of the ostensibly nationalistic Duplessis régime.

The critical turning point in the post-war development of the Catholic labour movement, or even of the social history of Quebec itself, in the view of some observers, came in the spectacular strike of asbestos workers in 1949. It signified, in the words of Jean-C. Falardeau, "the significant

rite de passage of the Catholic syndicates to adulthood and maturity." 73/
This bitter and prolonged struggle brought forth the unusual spectacle of the Catholic church openly supporting the union against the employers and the provincial government, after the Minister of Labour had officially declared the strike illegal and the Labour Relations Board had decertified the union. The dispute was finally settled after four months through the mediation of Mgr. Maurice Roy, Archbishop of Quebec. 74/

Hitherto the asbestos workers federation of the Catholic Confederation had been a relatively weak and ineffectual organization. It had been organized for the first time in 1936, but did not participate in the wave of strikes such as engulfed textiles, shipbuilding and a number of other industries in Quebec during the later 1930's. Indeed, the strike of 1949 was the first collective action the union undertook. 75/

The Johns Manville Company, for its part, as the dominant concern in the asbestos industry, appeared to be extremely rigid and authoritarian in attitude and policy, perhaps partly because of the relative weakness and ineffectiveness of the union hitherto. According to Gilles Beausoleil, also, the management appeared, previous to the strike, to become somewhat alarmed at the expression of certain views upheld in Catholic social doctrine, and expressed by prominent union leaders, concerning greater participation of workers and their union in areas considered as being exclusively in management's jurisdiction. 76/

At any rate, negotiations for a new agreement quickly reached a stalemate prior to the strike of 1949. The union had demanded substantial wage increases and other concessions, in view of the fact that, during the inflationary expansion of the late 1940's, Johns Manville and its competitors

had been making unusually large profits while wages had lagged considerably behind those of workers in comparable industries and occupations. The union also demanded a standard industry agreement negotiated with the federation of asbestos workers as a whole in place of separate company agreements with individual syndicats as hitherto. Johns Manville, as "pace-setter" for the employers, stood fast on an offer of a 5% wage increase and refused to consider the other union demands.

Under the procedure required in provincial legislation, the dispute should then have been submitted to "arbitration" (i.e., conciliation) and direct action deferred until the official report and recommendations were submitted. At a mass meeting of asbestos workers addressed by Jean Marchand, then Secretary General of the CTCC and now Minister of Regional Development, there was a virtually unanimous vote to strike Mr. Marchand's request for 48 hours delay to allow time to meet with the Minister of Labour was practically shouted down. 77/ This was probably motivated primarily by frustration and impatience at the intransigent stand of the employers led by Johns Manville. It may have been due in large measure, also, to the widely known and displayed hostility of the Duplessis regime to the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour, as well as, with the memories of the disastrous setback suffered by the textile workers in the 1937 strike, fear of a "sell-out."

Soon after the meeting pickets were posted at all entrances to the Johns Manville Company's operations. The management of Johns Manville immediately condemned the strike as illegal and announced its refusal to negotiate until the strikers returned to work. It sought, and later obtained, an injunction to prevent "illegal" picketing, or rather, picketing

in support of an illegal strike. It also announced its intention of suing the union for \$500,000 damages. 78/

The Minister of Labour a few weeks later stated officially that the strike was illegal and that the union locals would lose their certification unless the strikers returned to their jobs. 79/ Meanwhile, a force of 100 provincial police was dispatched to the scene early in the strike, despite the absence of any violence, disorder or property damage. Shortly after their arrival, the municipal council of the town of Asbestos passed a resolution condemning the provincial police on grounds that a large number of them were under the influence of alcohol; that a number of them were guilty of "indecent acts" (d'actes indécents) in the streets of the city, and had caused disorder in public places; and that unprovoked acts of violence had been committed against employees of Johns Manville during the strike with the evident purpose of provoking trouble.

From then on the lines of conflict hardened. Government officials and company spokesmen alike condemned the union leaders and sought by every means to drive a wedge between them and the rank-and-file. Premier Duplessis, during debates in the provincial legislature, referred to the "chiefs of the syndicats catholiques who are saboteurs more than they are labour leaders". In his explanation of the strike, he stated that "it is not the workers who are dissatisfied, but certain labour leaders who put their own interests ahead of the workers and seek to cause trouble." 80/ The Minister of Labour offered to meet with a delegation of strikers to discuss settlement of the issue, but only if officers of the CTCO, and more specifically Mr. Marchand, were excluded. This offer was rejected by the strikers.

Fortified by this attitude on the part of the government, the Johns Manville management stepped up its campaign to break the strike. Full-page newspaper advertisements and other media, as well as letters addressed directly to striking employees, stressed the illegality of the strike, vilified the union leaders, particularly Mr. Marchand, and stressed the refusal of the company, and of the government, to recognize the union and negotiate a settlement unless the strikers returned to work and repudiated their top leadership. At the same time the company carried out a vigorous program of recruiting strike-breakers from nearby villages and rural areas.

As the numbers of strike-breakers coming to work increased, there was a corresponding increase in outbreaks of violence against them, intimidation of their families, and damage to their property by "spontaneous groups" of strikers. 81/ Sporadic attacks on company property also occurred. Provincial police patrolled the streets more zealously to protect strike-breakers and company property.

Meanwhile the strikers were winning increasing support from outside. Donations of money and truckloads of food and other supplies poured into the area, from donors among other unions, including the TLC and CCL, and from student organizations and other groups. 82/ On March 16, more than a month after the strike had begun, Mr. Gérard Picard, President of the CTCC, announced that in an unprecedented show of labour unity a special committee had been formed by the three central labour federations of Canada to furnish support for the strikers and study means for achieving a satisfactory end to the strike. 83/

Even more impressive was the degree to which important leaders of the church came to the support of the strikers. A number of Catholic

organizations carried on public appeals and collections on their behalf. Most significant of all, Mgr. Joseph Charbonneau, Archbishop of Montreal, preached a sermon in Notre Dame Church calling on the faithful to subscribe to a special fund in support of the strikers. 84/

The scale of force and violence mounted as the strike dragged on. The employers were recruiting increasing numbers of strike-breakers and, as a particularly provocative gesture, Johns Manville announced a wage increase for strike-breakers and all strikers who returned to work, coupling this with the announcement that strike-breakers would be given priority in employment, and strikers would be rehired, when the strike ended, only as production required. 85/ As if this were not enough, the company threatened to evict a number of strikers from rented housing to make room for new employees. 86/

Attacks against strike-breakers increased and the provincial police responded accordingly. A number of strikers were arrested in their own homes as well as on the streets, and some were badly beaten and subjected to hours of interrogation without counsel. Mass picketing and parades by strikers and their supporters were broken up by tear gas bomb attacks by the police and on one or two occasions shots were fired. 87/

The strike was approaching a violent climax as it dragged on into the third month. Bloodshed on a large scale was narrowly averted during May 5 and 6. Pickets were massed in large numbers along the main approaches into the town of Asbestos and the main entrance to company property. They were armed with clubs and rocks to prevent, by force if necessary, the influx of strike-breakers who by now numbered in the hundreds. Meanwhile

the strike leaders had been informed of the dispatch of hundreds of additional provincial police to deal with the situation. The latter were reported armed with rifles, revolvers and machine guns, with orders to shoot if necessary.

The pickets at first refused to disperse and return to their homes in the face of this threat, until finally persuaded to do so, in the early hours of the morning, by strike leaders with the assistance of the local curé. 88/ They dispersed rapidly with the arrival, about 4 a.m., of a convoy of 28 vehicles containing the heavily armed provincial police. The police blocked all entrances to Asbestos then headed for the salle paroissiale in search of strikers from the nearby town of Thetford who had earlier been ordered to leave Asbestos. The salle paroissiale, in the basement of the church, had been converted into a cafeteria to feed the strikers and pickets on duty. Some 15 strikers were sleeping there when the police broke in by force. They were arrested, several within the church itself, beside la sacristie where they had fled. Several were badly beaten in a small room adjoining the main hall.

At 7 a.m. the Justice of the Peace read the Riot Act to a small assemblage in front of the church. As soon as it was read, the police arrested all men present. 89/ Throughout the day police visited the homes of strikers and arrested about 120 altogether. The arrested were taken to the Club Iroquois for interrogation, where many were reportedly punched, kicked and pushed hard against the wall. Many later released showed signs of severe ill-treatment. Several of these were threatened with further arrest unless they returned to work. 90/ Several strike leaders were committed to trial for "conspiracy." 91/

This concerted attack on the strikers received widespread publicity and brought new and wider support from outside, with large gifts in money and kind. This enabled the strikers to continue holding out despite apparently hopeless odds.

Beginning in mid-June Mgr. M. Roy, Archbishop of Quebec, undertook mediation efforts that finally brought an end to the strike. He entered discussions at various times with Premier Duplessis and the Minister of Labour, Honourable A. Barrette, as well as with top officials of Johns Manville and other companies, and with the CTCC. The strike finally ended on July 1, almost five months after it began, with a wage increase of 10 cents an hour and a guarantee to the strikers of re-employment without discrimination. 92/

After what the strikers had been through, and the formidable opposition that they had faced, these modest gains, or indeed, mere survival and de facto recognition as such, could be deemed a resounding victory for the asbestos workers' federation and the CTCC.

Victory in this long and highly publicized struggle brought the Catholic Confederation new prestige and strength and, for a few years, rapid organizational gains. By 1953 it had reached a new membership peak of more than 100,000. This apparently represented the limits to its growth at that time, however, as it declined in numbers for several years after. Attempts to establish a solid base of membership in manufacturing and heavy industry in the Montreal area brought Catholic syndicates into new and costly conflict, not only with employers but also with other unions, particularly affiliates of the Trades and Labour Congress. In the course of a strike

of nine weeks' duration against the Vickers Shipyards in 1952, for instance, a prominent official of an international union that had separate jurisdiction in the plant was seriously injured while attempting to go through a Catholic syndicate picket line. Spokesmen of the CTCC claimed that the AFL union had managed to retain jurisdiction of its local in the Vickers plant only because of "illegal" decisions by the Labour Relations Board, favouring AFL-TLC unions as against Catholic syndicates. Ironically, Catholic unionism, which had been condemned formerly by spokesmen of AFL unions for its excessive timidity and submissiveness, was now criticized for excessive militancy and violence. A protest meeting sponsored by the TLC-Quebec Federation of Labour passed a resolution that "deplores and denounces the use of gangster methods on the part of the Catholic syndicates" and expressed amazement at "the alliance between Communist elements, professional gangsters, and the leaders of the Catholic syndicates in Montreal." 23/

Similar difficulties attended the CTCC's attempts to expand its organizational base in other industries in which international unions were established. During the 1960's, however, under somewhat different circumstances, the CTCC (renamed the Canadian National Trades Unions, or CNTU), was able to make substantial gains at the expense of national and international affiliates of the Canadian Labour Congress.

Railway Strike in August 1950

The most important single labour dispute to develop in Canada during the post-war period was the one involving the railways, which culminated in an industry-wide strike of 125,000 non-operating employees during August 22 to 30, 1950. This was the first strike of any serious magnitude in railways since the era prior to World War I and the first in which both major

railway systems, the CPR and CNR, were involved on a nation-wide scale.

The dispute had been marked by bitter and protracted negotiations for more than a year, from June 1949, when the 1948 agreement came up for revision, until the announcement, on August 10, 1950, of the union's intention to strike on August 22. The announcement was followed by a sharp exchange of public statements between union and company spokesmen and by frantic last-minute efforts by the federal government to avert the strike.

The Press Bureau of the CPR and CNR issued a joint public statement through Donald Gordon, President of CNR, announcing that the companies' last offer was:

...the ultimate that can be expected...it is a final offer, and no good purpose will be served in taking it as another bargaining point. If it is not accepted, then it must follow that all compromise offers in this dispute are withdrawn and the railways stand by the provisions of the agreement dated July 1948, without any amendment. 94/

The statement presented estimates of the "formidable" increase in costs, and therefore in railway rates, that would be imposed if the unions' demands were met, and reported at some length the "solemn warning" that Mr. Gordon gave the union leaders about the "grave and frightening" weight of responsibility they would be assuming if they refused to accept the companies' terms and called a strike. The statement ended on a particularly sharp note. It referred to "the tradition of moderation and restraint" on both sides which had characterized relationships in the railway industry for many years. It then quoted Mr. Gordon as saying that "management is of the opinion that this sort of attitude is not now being exhibited. We question definitely that the union representatives are bargaining in good faith." 95/

The unions' reply was issued in a letter addressed to the heads of the railways by Frank Hall, Chairman of the negotiating committee for the 15 national and international unions involved in the negotiations. He stated:

We regret to have to advise that we can find no acceptable contribution to such a solution in either your statement or the 'final proposals' which accompanied it. Indeed, in some particulars we find the statement both irritating and provocative, calculated to increase the difficulty of reaching an amicable settlement. We view as particularly objectionable your statement that 'we question definitely that the union representatives are bargaining in good faith'. Our reply to this is to say what has been apparent to our Committee from the outset of the proceedings, that the railways' conception of bargaining is an interminable process calculated to preserve the status quo to the last possible moment, and deprive the employees of the improvements sought in working conditions and wages over a long period, during which workers in other industries have secured them....96/

Mr. Hall went on in his letter to point out that the unions had first served notice to the companies to begin negotiations for a new agreement on June 16, 1949. "Thus, although you allege there has been no real collective bargaining, almost fourteen months have elapsed and the issues are still unsettled." Meanwhile during this period, he pointed out, the unions' demand for a five-day, forty-hour week had come into force for railways in the United States, in which both the CPR and CNR had sizeable operations. And finally, substantial increases in the cost of living since the last agreement had been negotiated, in June 1948, had "eroded considerably the real earnings of railway employees." 97/

Prime Minister St. Laurent wrote both parties on August 16 requesting a 50-day postponement of the strike to allow time for a government-appointed inquiry commission to investigate and submit a report and recommendations. The unions' reply, while expressing support for such an investigation, was one of refusal to postpone the strike. 98/

The next step was to appoint Dr. W.A. Mackintosh, Vice-Principal of Queen's University, as a special mediator to attempt an eleventh-hour settlement of the dispute. He conducted intensive negotiations, in separate consultations with the parties, throughout August 19 to 21 and into the early hours of August 22, but failed to reach a settlement. In his report to the Prime Minister he stated:

The work of the mediator was made extraordinarily difficult by (1) the almost complete lack of confidence between the parties to the dispute; (2) the number and variety of unions which were attempting to bargain as one unit; (3) the very low level of effectiveness of collective bargaining in the industry; (4) the fact that the rapidly approaching menace of the strike created confusion between genuine bargaining and attempts to make statements of positions before the work stoppage took place. 99/

The attitudes and reactions of wide sections of the public, and particularly the main news media, to the approaching walkout were more extreme than had occurred in any major dispute with the exception of the Winnipeg General Strike. It would not be exaggerating, perhaps, to say that they bordered on the hysterical. According to a special survey report published in the Labour Gazette:

While tension mounted as the special mediator, Dr. McIntosh, pressed his efforts in day-and-night negotiations, each edition of the newspapers and every radio bulletin reflected the anxiety of the nation, in alternating moods of hope and apprehension, with such phrases as 'the fateful hour is at hand.' Pre-strike predictions voiced dire warnings such as one that 'the lives of almost everyone will be immediately and for the most part adversely affected if the railway strike goes into effect.' On the day the work stoppage began, a metropolitan daily in Central Canada announced that 'shortages of meat and other perishable foods are forecast if the strike lasts for more than a day or so.' The mayor of one municipality in Northern Ontario declared that its population of 29,000 'will starve within a week unless the strike is lifted.' On August 26th a reputable newsmen, apparently misled by statements as to lay-offs that might occur if the strike were prolonged, reported that there were 'around 500,000 Canadians idle as a

direct result of the strike, and that if it were not settled within a week, 'this figure will soar to 750,000.' 100/

Such dire predictions proved to be exaggerated. According to the best estimates of the federal Department of Labour, some 199,000 railway workers at most were directly on strike, or laid off because of it, and another 23,000 workers in other industries were temporarily laid off. Nothing in the nature of shortages of food or other necessities occurred in any centres of population served by roads, highways or waterways, as automotive and water transportation were used intensively to fill most of the gaps left by the railway strike. "Mercy trains" were allowed by the companies and the unions to carry shipments of food and other necessities to the more isolated communities depending entirely on railway transportation. 101/

When the strike commenced on the morning of August 22, the Prime Minister announced that a special session of Parliament would be held to deal with the emergency. On August 24 he also convened a special meeting of leading company and union representatives to resume direct negotiations in another last-ditch effort to effect a settlement. After two days these negotiations likewise ended in a stalemate.

The special session of Parliament commenced on August 29, 1950 and, by suspension of the standing orders of the House of Commons, the Prime Minister introduced a bill to enact The Maintenance of Railway Operations Act. This was subsequently passed after some discussion and amendment. The Act required the railways to resume operations and the employees to return to work. The parties meanwhile were to resume negotiations and, if agreement still were not reached, all issues of the dispute were to be determined by arbitration, the Governor in Council appointing the arbitrator if the parties

were unable to agree on their choice. The Act stipulated that the arbitrator was to decide matters within the limits of the offers and counterproposals that had been made when negotiations between the parties had finally terminated. This guaranteed the employees at least an immediate 44-hour week, and a 40-hour week by September 1, 1951. It was made explicit in the debates in Commons that the new Act was temporary only, to deal with a current national emergency, and was not designed to establish precedents or procedures for subsequent bargaining negotiations. 102/ On this basis the strike ended on August 30, 1950.

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- 89/ Ibid., pp. 198-99.
- 90/ Ibid., p. 200.
- 91/ Loc. cit.
- 92/ Ibid., p. 205.
- 93/ Montreal Gazette, September 13, 1952, p. 15.
- 94/ Quoted in Labour Gazette, 1950, pp. 1639-40.
- 95/ Ibid., p. 1640.
- 96/ Loc. cit.
- 97/ Ibid., p. 1641.

98/ Ibid., p. 1642.

99/ Ibid., p. 1643.

100/ Ibid., p. 1649.

101/ Ibid., p. 1651-2.

102/ Ibid., pp. 1638-54.

CHAPTER VII

THE FABULOUS BUT FALTERING FIFTIES: 1951-59

The great railway strike of 1950 marked the end of, if not an era, at least a distinct phase, in the postwar evolution of labour relations in Canada. It was the last major industrial conflict that could be directly attributed to the various strains and maladjustments, particularly as regards disparities in wage increases and various fringe benefits, that arose out of World War II and the postwar inflationary expansion that ended in the brief recession of late 1949-50.

The unforeseen outbreak of the Korean War in mid-1950 and the brief but intense spurt of inflation that accompanied it during 1950-51 generated new unrest and a flurry of strikes, the vast majority of which were small and of brief duration. In many cases employers faced with profitable contracts and rapidly increasing demands for their output, in effect bought labour peace by voluntarily and unilaterally increasing wages by enough, or more than enough, to compensate for higher living costs. Various fiscal and monetary policies and, in the United States, wage and price freezes, coupled with a variety of other devices, succeeded in halting the inflationary rise in prices by the end of 1951.

The 1950's, superficially, and in a limited way, had some parallels to the 1920's; or more specifically, in terms of years, 1952-59 resembled 1922-29. Overall, it was a period of prosperity, in so far as Gross National Product (GNP) and per capita money incomes rose, though real income per capita fell during the latter years of 1957-59. Americanization of the Canadian economy occurred at an even more accelerated rate than in the 1920's. The unprecedented investment of United States capital in Canadian industries and resources, and the acquisition of Canadian firms as subsidiaries of parent United States corporations, occurred on such a scale as to alarm many people even in conservative business circles. Massive investments, particularly in resource development projects, created new industries such as oil and gas refineries and pipelines, iron ore, iron mining and smelting and various lines of secondary manufacturing. In the aggregate these substantially transformed the Canadian industrial structure.

Employment likewise increased at an even greater rate than in the 1920's, though at the same time unemployment as a percentage of the labour force likewise increased, particularly, again, after 1957. The rate of population growth, from immigration and from "natural increase" alike, was far higher than in any period since the pre-War I era. Despite the significant gains in output, income, population and employment over the decade as a whole, the price level generally rose only moderately in Canada after the initial inflationary impact of the Korean War's outbreak. Inflation was far less serious in Canada than in most comparably industrialized countries during the 1950's.

In general, the decade of the 1950's in many respects represented a period of stability and growth, widespread optimism, complacency and conservatism of a kind broadly similar to that of the 1920's, and one that we

seem unlikely to experience again in our lifetimes. Popular magazine articles of a pseudo-intellectual kind referred to it as the "Age of Happy Problems". Popular sociologists or social observers such as David Riesman in The Lonely Crowd and William F. Whyte in The Organization Man pictured the prevailing ideology as one of adjustment and conformity to a generally accepted social structure and economic system. It was even more conservative than the 1920's in some respects. Whereas many parents in the earlier era had deplored the extravagances of "Flaming Youth", in the 1950's they were more inclined to worry about their offspring "going steady", marrying and procreating at an inordinately early age, while being preoccupied with the search for security and comfort rather than new experience. Numerous commentators referred to the young people of this period as the "Silent Generation", the "Apathetic Generation", or the "Careful Young Men". Young male workers, it was alleged, expressed an interest in jobs largely in terms of the pensions rather than the challenges that were offered, while their wives sought escape in "Küche, Kirche und Kinder" as Betty Friedan claimed in her widely-read The Feminine Mystique.

Politically, likewise, the atmosphere in Canada was predominantly conservative. The moderately socialist CCF party during the middle and later 1950's declined to its lowest point since the War, in terms of voting support and elected representation. As observed in one survey in 1957:

It is a significant harbinger of the times in Canada that dissatisfaction with the "Old Parties" and the rise to power of new political movements have tended to develop in a conservative rather than radical direction since the War. The Union Nationale Party, when it first came into power in Quebec during the mid-Thirties, had a strong representation of left-wing Nationalistic elements. Today it largely represents an adaptation of Toryism to the special circumstances of French Canada. Again, the Social Credit Party has remained in power for several years in the

traditionally radical western provinces of Alberta and British Columbia. Originally it was a movement dedicated with an almost religious zeal to the cause of monetary reform. Since the war it has become identified with political conservatism and financial orthodoxy, and is supported by spokesmen of major business interests as a "bulwark against Socialism." 1/

Such trends were even more pronounced in the United States. The liberal wing of the Democratic Party, which had been in power during the 1930's and World War II, declined in the immediate postwar years. It enjoyed a temporary revival following the spectacular election victory of President Truman in 1948. Then the Republican Party won a landslide victory in 1952, which was repeated even more decisively in 1956. President Eisenhower in the United States and Prime Minister St. Laurent in Canada perhaps best exemplified the spirit of the age, representing, as they did, aged, comfortable and conservative "father figures." The United States also experienced a resurgence of an extreme brand of conservatism inspired by the onslaughts of Senator Joseph McCarthy and his followers. The hysterical "witch-hunt" that was conducted in the United States in the early 1950's against suspected Communists and "fellow-travellers" was strongly reminiscent of the early 1920's in that country.

There were other broad similarities to the 1920's as well. The conservative trend represented, in part, important changes in the basic occupational structure in Canada and the United States alike. There was a pronounced increase in the employment of "white collar" professional, executive, clerical, sales and service workers, and a static or shrinking demand for manual labour coupled with a massive displacement of farm operators and workers from the land and their mass migration to urban areas.

The 1950's, like the 1920's, was also a period of rapid technological change and displacement of labour. The threat of "automation" became even more of a nightmare in some labour circles than "mechanization" had been earlier. Despite an almost uninterrupted and significant rise in total output, income and employment during the 1950's, as noted, the rate of unemployment also continued to rise, from peak to peak and trough to trough, in cycles within a broad trend of expansion.

In the midst of these prevailing trends the trade union movement again experienced stagnation of a kind, though not decline and virtual disintegration as in the 1920's. In Canada, as in the United States, trade unionism by the mid-1950's appeared to have reached a plateau at the top of an almost uninterrupted but gradually slackening "growth curve" since the latter 1930's. During 1954-55, while output and employment continued to expand, total union membership remained virtually unchanged, and in the latter years of the decade the percentage it represented of total non-agricultural paid employment actually declined. In both countries trade unionism appeared to have reached temporary limits to its growth. That is to say, virtually all workers that were organizable, in terms of prevailing union techniques, finances, ideologies and policies, had been enrolled. The two-thirds or more of paid workers who remained outside of union ranks represented primarily the employees of small or isolated enterprises that were largely uneconomical to organize and, far more important in the aggregate, the large and rapidly growing numbers of white collar workers who, hitherto, unions had found extremely difficult to attract.

As in the 1920's, the labour movement appeared to have become a prisoner of its previously acquired organizational structure, ideology and

policies, and incapable of adjusting effectively to the new technologies and trends in occupational structure. And perhaps to overwork the parallel, there were widely publicized disclosures by the McLellan Committee of the United States Senate, of racketeering, fraud, illegality and violence on the part of some unions, on a scale that seriously damaged the public image of organized labour as a whole. Serious students of the labour scene, such as the sociologist Daniel Bell in his widely-read treatise on The End of Ideology, postulated that organized labour on this continent faced a long-run future of declining membership, bargaining-power, prestige and influence. In effect, he argued, union leaders and members alike, as a result of their very success over the past decade in winning large wage increases and liberal fringe benefits such as pensions, health and welfare plans and paid vacations, had lost their former crusading zeal as fighters and representatives of the "underdog". They had, instead, become old, fat, complacent and middle-class in outlook, quite in tune with the temper of the times. More optimistic observers tended to interpret this trend as representing a growing "maturity" in unionism and labour-management relations.

Further contributing to conservatism in the social and economic environment generally, and in trade unionism in particular, was the striking change in the age distribution as well as in the occupational structure of the labour force. The sharp drop in birth-rates during the depression 1930's had led, some twenty years later, to an unusually small number and percentage of the population in the teens and twenties age group. One striking measure of this cycle in age distribution was the fact that the 1951 census of Canada showed, in absolute numbers, fewer persons in the 10-year to 20-year age group than did the 1931 census, despite a growth in population of almost 50 per cent in the intervening two decades. This in turn meant a shortage in

the supply of younger workers entering the labour market, predominantly for unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. The shortage of supply relative to demand enabled them to enjoy substantial wage increases. The gap was partially filled in Canada by the rising tide of immigrants, most of whom enjoyed substantially higher earnings than in their homelands. Correspondingly, an unusually large proportion of the labour force, particularly, perhaps, union leaders and members, were middle-aged people who had experienced the worst years of the depression in their teens and twenties and were now enjoying unprecedented gains in income, job security, and other benefits. This combination of circumstances tended to generate a widespread air of conservatism, conformity and complacency.

Management likewise appeared to be undergoing a "softening" process during the early 1950's, at least to judge from the philosophies expounded by leading business publications and the policies endorsed, in principle at least, by spokesmen of a number of prominent concerns. The old image of the employer had been that of an authoritarian "boss" unilaterally exerting his authority, making decisions and issuing orders to be transmitted down through an hierarchical chain of command to submissive, though sometimes sullen and hostile workers. Unions were viewed as strictly alien entities which impinged on management "prerogatives" and thereby, on certain assumptions, reduced efficiency of operations. They were to be resisted with force, if necessary. The new image of the ideal employer, to present the opposite extreme, was that of an expert in "human relations" who was sensitive to the "human factor". While firm and inspiring confidence among his subordinates, at the same time he was gifted with tact, diplomacy, and ability to negotiate and exact compromises. He was able thereby to win compliance to authority voluntarily by eliciting positive co-operation

from subordinates and instilling them with positive satisfaction in their jobs. Or, as critics alleged, the emphasis in management circles changed from "force" to "manipulation" in getting compliance from employees.

In view of this general atmosphere and set of trends, as noted, there appeared to be a marked decline in union militancy as measured by such overt manifestations as strikes. The comprehensive statistical and analytical survey of industrial conflict in 15 countries by Ross and Hartman 2/, referred to earlier, seemed to bear out these conclusions. Only in the United States and Canada, these authors concluded, had the strike continued to be a usable tactic for economic advantage, while as a form of effective mass social protest it had virtually disappeared. But the general incidence of strikes in both countries had declined markedly from the pre-war and immediate postwar years relative to the great expansion in employment and union membership that had occurred. The major battles between unions and employers had already been fought, the authors concluded, and they predicted, using Marx's phrase for quite different conclusions, a long-term "withering away" of the strike.

It would be all too easy, of course, to exaggerate the similarities in trends between the 1950's and the 1920's. In fact, the position of the trade union movement, and of the economy generally, was very different in important respects from the earlier period. The legislative changes of the latter 1930's in the United States and during and after World War II in Canada, as noted, provided a broad base of security and protection for trade union generally against the possibility of any concerted anti-union campaign by employers to destroy them. Moreover, broad social security programs such as unemployment insurance, family allowances and old age pensions put some

sort of income floor under the unorganized or poorly organized lower income groups in the population. And, significantly, long standing divisions and rivalries between the major labour federations were healed in the mid-1950's. The AFL and CIO in the United States merged into one federation in 1955 and the next year, in Canada, the Trades and Labour Congress and the Canadian Congress of Labour merged into the Canadian Labour Congress. Their subsidiary bodies at the provincial and local levels were similarly joined.

Union membership continued to grow during the 1950's, albeit less slowly than before, and unions continued to win significant gains for their members. Strikes, it is true, as they had in the 1920's, fell off sharply in frequency, size and time-loss, relative to total employment as compared to the immediate postwar years and earlier. But in contrast to the earlier period most strikes in the 1950's, at least the larger and more protracted ones, were for tangible gains rather than for defence or survival, and most of them were at least partially successful in achieving their objectives. Strikes, of course, occurred as the end result of only a very minor fraction of the thousands of collective bargaining negotiations each year that ended in agreement, and even of the minority of negotiations that developed into disputes that had to go through conciliation procedures required under new federal and provincial labour statutes. Most unions during the 1950's were able to win substantial gains for their members — in wages, fringe benefits and working conditions — without resorting to strikes, picketing, boycotts, or other overt manifestations of industrial conflict.

Indeed, many observers of the labour movement in the 1950's criticized it, not for its conservatism and lack of militancy, but rather for its very effectiveness in terms of its announced objectives or, as alleged by some

critics, for its "irresponsibility". Prominent spokesmen in business circles, with apparently wide support from news media and large sectors of the public, were prone to put the main blame on organized labour and its insistent pressure for higher wages and fringe benefits for such complex economic problems as inflation, adverse trade balances, and unemployment. This general view even won support among a minority in respectable and liberal academic circles. The noted Harvard economist, John K. Galbraith, for instance, maintained that powerful union in "key" industries, such as steel, in which a few large producers enjoyed oligopolistic control over output and prices in the market were able to win larger than average wage increases or other benefits by virtue of their superior bargaining power. They set off "chain reactions" throughout the economy. Steel companies were able to raise prices by more than enough to cover wage increases or other benefits in excess of productivity. These in turn increased the costs of materials and equipment in other industries and at the same time provoked new wage or other demands among workers in less productive or profitable sections of the economy. Governments, faced with fixed commitments for full employment, defence, foreign aid and other expenditures, were forced to engage in inflationary fiscal and monetary policies to sustain output at higher wage and price levels. And so on in a "vicious cycle" of "wage-push" inflation. 3/

There also appeared to be an increasingly conservative bent, in a sense, in the issues that became central in collective bargaining. During the 1940's and earlier, as noted, the main preoccupation of unions, and the central issue in the major disputes and strikes that developed, had been wage increases. During the 1950's to an increasing extent the main focus became that of job and income security. The decade opened with the negotiation of new agreements by major pace-setting unions in the United States,

such as in coal mining, automobiles and steel. These provided, in some cases only after large and prolonged strikes, for company financed pensions, assured medical care and various other types of "welfare" benefits. Private company-financed pension plans negotiated by unions had existed in only a few hundred companies in Canada during the 1940's. By the early 1950's they numbered in the thousands. By the end of the decade, pensions, medical insurance and other welfare benefits covered the majority of organized workers in both Canada and the United States.

Another significant breakthrough was achieved in the 1955 agreement between the Ford Motor Company and the UAW, providing for company-financed "supplementary unemployment benefits" as a step toward achieving the "Guaranteed Annual Wage". Similar provisions were achieved in union agreements in other companies and industries in the United States and Canada.

And finally, during the latter 1950's and early 1960's, there were a number of highly publicized union agreements with particular companies and industries that provided for various devices to protect the jobs and incomes of existing employees. Outstanding among these were the "profit-sharing" agreement with American Motors, the "progress-sharing" agreement with Kaiser Steel, and the mechanization and savings arrangement in the west coast long-shoring agreement. One other indication, perhaps, of the growing preoccupation with security as against immediate gain was the increasing emphasis on seniority in union agreements, in hiring and firing, transfers and promotions. Disputes over the interpretation of seniority provisions in union agreements became the most important single issue in grievance procedure and arbitration hearings.

In the light of these trends in unionism and collective bargaining, in a highly complex and confusing social and economic environment as described earlier, it becomes even more difficult to assess the degree of industrial unrest that prevailed in Canada during the 1950's as compared to the 1940's and earlier.

The growing importance put on job and income security in union agreements would in itself seem to indicate that industrial unrest, in the broad sense of the term, was considerably less widespread than in any preceding decade with the exception, perhaps, of the 1920's. That is to say, the fact that so many workers covered by union agreements in major industries and companies opted for job security and pension or medical benefits rather than immediate wage increases, would seem in itself to be evidence that they were not overly dissatisfied with their employers or with the wages and working conditions they provided. Or where such dissatisfaction did exist, it was more likely to be expressed in demands for more liberal provisions for retirement or for shorter hours and longer vacations so as to allow for more leisure-time recreation and "escape" from the job, rather than in mass protests and strikes.

The picture of industrial relations in the 1950's presented so far is, in brief, one of declining labour unrest, union militancy and industrial conflict in the United States and Canada. These were accompanied, on the whole, by more conciliatory and accomodating management attitudes and policies. A number of prominent examples of union-management co-operation in meeting problems of mutual interest received wide publicity and enthusiastic support in some labour and employer circles. As compared to preceding decades a more "mature" and harmonious stage of industrial relations appeared to have developed.

If concluded at this point, however, the picture would be a seriously oversimplified and misleading one. Labour and employer groups on the North American continent are characterized by a high degree of diversity in behaviour patterns, and dominant trends or cycles in attitude and policy generally do not exhibit a high degree of consistency. Counter to what has been portrayed as the prevailing atmosphere of the 1950's, there continued to be important sectors of the economy in Canada and the United States alike in which intense, prolonged and occasionally violent industrial disputes occurred.

Various developments during the latter 1950's seemed to indicate, in retrospect, the beginning of a new cycle of rising tension and conflict between organized labour and management. One prominent Catholic scholar and student of the labour scene in the United States, writing in 1959, made the following observation:

Labor-management relations have deteriorated [in recent years]. The evidence is not hard to discover. It can be found at the bargaining table, where attitudes have notably congealed; in the halls of Congress and in State capitols, where labor and management lobbies make life difficult for vote-conscious legislators; and in business and labor literature and oratory. It is to be found especially in the spread of a spirit of suspicion and class hostility which in many cases is no longer being even thinly disguised. 4/

Despite the overall decline in the incidence of strikes during the 1950's there continued to be a great deal of concern, among employers and other groups, about the unprecedented size and apparent power of the trade union movement. And, as noted earlier, there was a widespread tendency to lay much of the blame on the shoulders of organized labour for the limited degree of inflation that did occur during the 1950's. Also, during the latter years of the decade, wide publicity was given to the hearings of a

special investigating committee of the United States Senate, which brought to light instances of racketeering and corruption in a number of prominent labour organizations. And in certain provinces in Canada, finally, there appeared to be a rising incidence of illegal "wildcat" strikes, though most of these were relatively small and of brief duration.

Such developments led major business organizations to put mounting pressure on governments at all levels to pass new legislation that would place additional curbs on union activities. This resulted in passage of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 in the United States concerning election and administration procedures and disclosures of information by unions; and, in British Columbia, to the Labour Relations Act of 1954 and the Trade-unions Act of 1959, which placed new restrictions and penalties upon unions engaging in illegal strikes or picketing.

A new posture of "toughness" in management attitudes and policies also became evident during the latter 1950's. It was best exemplified by the highly publicized technique known as "Boulewareism", named after its originator, Lemuel J. Bouleware, Vice President in charge of Industrial Relations for General Electric in the United States. It was tantamount to a unilateral rejection, by management, of collective bargaining with unions. Under this system the company decided beforehand just how much it would be willing to pay in wage increases or other concessions. At the outset of formal negotiations with the union this "package" would then be stated as the company's maximum, and therefore final offer, coupled with an announced willingness to submit to a strike of indefinite duration if the union refused this offer. This decision would usually be announced publicly or by circular letter to the employees and union members. The union, in

effect, would be faced with an ultimatum to "put up or shut up", to capitulate or to face a long and costly strike. Variants of "Boulewarism" appear to have been fairly widely adopted by various companies and employer associations during the latter 1950's and early 1960's. 5/

Another indication of the "new toughness" was the frequency with which company managements took the initiative in submitting their own demands on unions in collective bargaining, contrary to the customary posture of being on the defensive. The protracted and costly steel strike of 1959 in the United States was provoked in large part, and certainly lengthened in duration, by the companies' insistence on the United Steel Workers' abandoning various "work rules".

The "new toughness" in management policy was encouraged by a special combination of circumstances that developed in the latter 1950's: e.g., the declining rate of growth after the peak boom year of 1957; the lagging productivity in Canada and the United States as compared to most industrial countries; despite these, continually rising wages that created "cost-price squeezes" in various industries; more rapid technological change, particularly in the category of "automation", that was causing large-scale displacement of labour; and high and rising rates of unemployment, ranging from 5 per cent to more than 7 per cent in both Canada and the United States during 1958-61.

The changing stance of management arising out of such circumstances during the latter 1950's was matched, to a limited degree, by signs of renewed militancy among some sectors of organized labour. One possible indication, in Canada, was the fact that labour unrest during the decade, as measured both by number of strikes and by total man-days of employment

lost in strikes, reached a peak in 1958, a year of severe recession in which the rate of unemployment reached the highest level since the 1930's.

RAILWAY STRIKE-1957

Some of the most important strikes in Canada during the 1950's arose over opposition to technological changes and displacement of labour instituted by employers. Outstanding among these was the strike carried out by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen against the Canadian Pacific Railway. It involved 2,850 union members directly, and an estimated 45,160 indirectly, in a nation-wide shutdown of the company's railway operations during January 2 to 11, 1957. It arose out of the union's refusal to accept the CPR's proposal to dispense with the employment of firemen on diesel engines in freight and yard service. The company proposed to maintain the firemen in their jobs but to gradually phase them out of employment through a policy of "attrition". The union, with the full support of its International Executive, opposed the company's policy, essentially in view of the prospect that, once adopted by the CPR, it would be rapidly brought into force by other railway companies, in the United States as well as Canada, and thus lead to a drastic reduction in union membership.

The strike ended after nine days when the Canadian government appointed a three-man Commission of Inquiry under Mr. Justice R.L. Kellock to study the whole issue. After almost a year of investigation the Commission submitted a report upholding the company's proposal. Efforts by the Brotherhood to launch a new strike collapsed when other railway unions refused to support it. 6/

VIOLENCE IN STRIKES

Another indication of renewed unrest and militancy in some sections of organized labour was the relatively small but perceptively rising incidence of violence, property damage, personnel injuries and, for the first time in more than a generation, deaths, in various industrial disputes in Canada. A detailed study of violence in industrial disputes across the country during 1957 to 1967 inclusive 7/ listed seventeen such disputes in the latter 1950's. Five occurred in 1957, three in 1958 and nine in 1959. Of the seventeen, twelve occurred in Ontario, three in Quebec, and two in the Maritimes. 8/

Most of these were relatively small disputes involving at most a few hundred workers and one or two employers. Most of them also took place in small outlying communities in economically backward or underdeveloped areas of the country. And, characteristic of an earlier era, the strikers in most cases comprised newly unionized workers attempting to deal with strongly anti-union employers. Two of the most highly publicized in this category were a strike of copper miners in the Gaspé region of eastern Quebec, and one of lumber workers in Newfoundland.

Copper Mining, — Murdochville, Quebec.

The strike against the Gaspé Copper Mines in Murdochville, Quebec, was a bitter and protracted struggle that lasted from March 10 to October, 1957. It involved 924 mining employees who had been recently organized by the United Steel Workers of America. The main issue in the strike was the company's refusal to recognize and negotiate with the union (which refusal was upheld by the Supreme Court of Quebec) and its provocative action in firing

union organizers. Union spokesmen charged the provincial government with following a discriminatory policy in refusing to certify the union or to require the company to bargain, despite the overwhelming majority of the company employees that were union members. The provincial government classed the strike as illegal and provided ample police protection to the employer to recruit strike-breakers. The conflict, through much of its course but not in its ending, was broadly similar to the asbestos workers' strike of 1949.

As portrayed by Roger Chartier in his account 9/, the strike involved some complicated legal and procedural issues and several dubious practices by the employer and the provincial government alike. These contributed to the serious violence and property damage that occurred during the strike.

Gaspé Copper Mines, a subsidiary of Noranda Mines in the mid-1950's employed about 1,000 workers, housed in a "company town" of about 2500. In 1952, when the company was building its plant and beginning operations, the United Steelworkers of America, CIO-CCL, launched an organizing campaign and within a few months, claiming membership of 80 per cent of the employees, applied to the provincial Labour Relations Board for certification. This the company opposed on the grounds that it was not in full production and that the workers employed at that time would not be typical of those who would be employed in the future. This argument the Labour Relations Board accepted and therefore refused certification to the union.

The USW tried again the following year but was faced with rivalry from the newly chartered International Union of Mine Employees, Gaspé district, which was directly affiliated with the Trades and Labour Congress. The company sided with the latter organization and apparently had the

support of the provincial government.

USW organizers were driven out of Murdochville, a company town, by police, and had to camp several miles away. The Labour Relations Board certified the ITC union, which negotiated a two-year agreement with the company in 1954. Despite the over-conciliatory policy of the union, a dispute developed with the company over negotiations for a new agreement in 1956, and the union requested the services of a provincial conciliator. 10/

At this point a new development of major proportions drastically changed the labour-management scene in Murdochville. The American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations had negotiated a merger in the United States in 1955, and in Canada the Trades and Labour Congress and the Canadian Congress Of Labour during 1955-56 had been negotiating to achieve the same result. In Murdochville, the two congresses gave the copper miners the choice as to their affiliations. By June 1956, the USW claimed membership of 80 to 95 per cent of the Gaspé Copper Mine employees and applied for transference of certification from the International Union of Mine Employees. The provincial Labour Relations Board reported favourably on this request. The company, however, demanded, and received, an official notification of delay of transference.

Then, on August 1, 1957, came the "bombshell." The company had obtained a "writ of prohibition" from the Superior Court of Quebec against the Labour Relations Board's move to transfer certification to the USW on the grounds that "proper legal procedures" had not been followed. 11/ The union (i.e., USW local in Murdochville) was thus blocked from normal collective bargaining relations in negotiating a new agreement with the company. Meanwhile there had been an accumulation of grievances since 1954 as well as

new wage demands arising out of the unprecedented boom of 1955-56. There were numerous complaints of discriminatory layoffs and dismissals, including that of the local president of the union. A union meeting in late September 1956 voted almost 98 per cent in favor of a strike. 12/

The strike did not begin until March 8, and by March 10 a total shut-down of operations had been achieved. The company, however, obtained an ex parte injunction from a Supreme Court judge against picketing, on the grounds that the strike was illegal because the union involved was not properly certified. A few days later the company launched damage suits of \$45,000 against specified union leaders. 13/

From then on there was a rapid escalation in tactics of intimidation, property damage and violence. On April 25 fifty provincial police were sent to Murdochville to maintain "law and order." Union spokesmen claimed that they deliberately provoked violence in order to whip up public opinion against the strikers. The police, on their part, claimed that they had found twelve sticks of dynamite on company property, designed to damage operations. 14/ Next day a large oil storage tank was dynamited. The provincial police force was accordingly increased to 100 men and the company employed an additional 40 armed private detectives who forced union pickets to evacuate their headquarters in the middle of the night. 15/

Company policy was not one designed to "cool" the situation. The manager, in a letter dated May 20, stated that:

- 1) those who did not return to work would no longer be considered employees; and
- 2) the USW was a union seeking to impose its will on the mining

industry by fomenting strikes. On June 7 the company unilaterally announced a "package" of wage increases, extra holidays and a sickness and accident insurance plan for those employees who remained at or returned to work. This was followed shortly afterwards with another letter announcing that unless strikers returned to work they would be permanently replaced. This was coupled with an announcement of a large-scale drive to recruit strike-breakers. 16/

These announcements served, to generate further violence and property damage. Another dynamite explosion further disrupted company operations. One striker, in the company of two others, was fatally injured on July 14 by a dynamite blast on company property. Sabotage was suspected. There were frequent scuffles between strikers, non-strikers and police, and two company employees were severely beaten and injured. A freighter carrying copper concentrates from Murdochville was seized by a group of strike sympathizers in Montreal and one man was injured in the fight that ensued. During the course of a parade in Murdochville by union leaders and strikers, led by Claude Jodoin, President of the Canadian Labour Congress, and Jean Picard, President of the rival Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour, in a demonstration of mutual support and labour unity, a crowd of about 100 onlookers ("voyons") "pillaged the local headquarters of the USW, damaged the building and turned over a dozen automobiles." Claude Prevost, President of the Quebec Federation of Labour, accused the government, the company and the provincial police of "connivance" and of deliberately provoking violence. 17/

Repeated requests by the USW for government intervention to end the strike were rejected on the grounds that the Labour Relations Board had been enjoined from certifying the union and that the strike, therefore, was illegal. This position was supported by the Supreme Court of Quebec, which in September reaffirmed the validity of the "stay of prohibition" against the Labour Relations Board and the union.

The strikers capitulated soon afterwards. On October 5, 1957, 300 strikers voted, by an 80 per cent majority, to return to work. The company, on its part, announced that it had need for only 200 of them, while retaining 800 non-strikers in employment. 18/ Subsequently it sued the United Steelworkers' Union for, and was awarded, more than one million dollars in damages.

The Murdochville strike represented one of the most serious defeats suffered by organized labour in Canada during the 1950's. To quote Emile Gosselin:

In the view of union leaders throughout the Province, the action of the Company in blocking the proceedings of the Labour Relations Commission not only menaced the whole legal system regulating labour relations, but reduced to nothing the rights of workers, particularly those concerning the freedom to unionize. 19/

Certain prominent dignitaries of the Catholic Church in Quebec concurred in this view. Mgr. Maurice Roy, Archbishop of Quebec, who had successfully mediated the asbestos workers' strike of 1949, in addressing syndicats catholiques of the Quebec region in referring to the Murdochville strike declared that:

Such divisions become particularly sad when even the life of a union is compromised and the right of association is taken lightly ("mise en jeu"). We have unfortunately seen, here and elsewhere, this fundamental right fought by certain employers. 20/

Lumber Workers in Newfoundland—1959

The bitter and at times violent industrial conflict that developed in Newfoundland arose out of the efforts of the International Woodworkers of America (IWA) to unionize loggers and other lumber workers in that province. The main strike, or strikes, arose out of the union's demands for a wage increase above the prevailing \$1.05 an hour, a reduction of hours from the prevailing sixty hours a week, improved living conditions in logging camps, and union recognition.

The union directed its campaign against the two main lumber, pulp and paper companies in Newfoundland, namely, Anglo Newfoundland Development Corporation, with its main operations in Grand Falls and the Bowaters Corporation with operations largely in western Newfoundland. The strikes involved 1,360 employees of the first mentioned concern, from December 31, 1958 to March 16, 1959, and 1,500 in the second, from January 17 to March 31, 1959. 21/

From the outset of its campaign the IWA faced implacable opposition from the provincial government, and more specifically, Premier Joseph Smallwood. He feared that if a "mainland" union like the IWA were to unionize Newfoundland's woodworkers and impose mainland wage and hour standards, the province's economy would be undermined. When the strikes against the two main employing companies became deadlocked the provincial government under Mr. Smallwood's leadership took the initiative in organizing a rival union, the Newfoundland Brotherhood of Wood Workers, to counteract the IWA's efforts. 22/

There were numerous outbreaks of violence and property damage in the course of the strikes. Members of the IWA were alleged on one occasion to have raided two camps housing non-strikers and forced them to walk ten miles to shelter, causing some serious injury and hardship. Violence and damage to property also occurred when independent logging contractors attempted to cross IWA picket lines. A climax was reached at Badger, Newfoundland, a rallying point for strikers, when 75 pickets were ordered off the road by a force of 60 RCMP officers. In the course of the ensuing clash, which the strikers claimed was provoked by the police, one RCMP officer was killed when struck over the head by a club-wielding picket and several men were seriously injured. Subsequently, at Windsor, Newfoundland, crowds smashed the IWA's office when the RCMP constable's body was put on a train. Other IWA offices were wrecked elsewhere on the island. 23/

Finally the provincial government passed new legislation which, in effect, rendered the IWA illegal and outlawed it from Newfoundland.

Teamsters Strikes

Southern Ontario and Quebec—1959.

A series of strikes carried out by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters against several trucking companies in southern Ontario and Quebec during February to July, 1959 generated numerous instances of assault and property damage. Unlike most of the violent labour conflicts such as the two described above, this involved a well established union, and the main centres of action were in the most industrially developed region in Canada. The general picture appeared to be something of a harbinger of things to come in the 1960's. Most of the strikes were relatively small and of a few weeks duration, but in a number of cases were intense and bitter while they lasted. Trucks were reported damaged or destroyed by fire in Toronto, Hamilton and Brantford, Ontario. In Galt, Ontario, allegedly, acid was

thrown in a man's face while he was driving a truck in defiance of the strike. There was an explosion followed by fire at a struck plant in Milton, Ontario and two teamster employees were charged. In Montreal, at the Summers Construction Company, strikers alleged that police fired a machine gun at them and drove a car directly at their picket line. And at the Luminous Construction Company in Ville d'Anjou, Quebec, there was mob violence and police were reported to have opened fire on the crowd. 24/

The Overall Pattern of Strikes

The few violent strikes described briefly above were outstanding exceptions to the general pattern that prevailed at the time.

Relative to total employment and union membership the incidence of strikes in Canada during the 1950's was considerably below any previous decade with the exception of the 1920's, as noted earlier. By and large, strikes were far more orderly and peaceful, and occasioned less force and violence, property damage, and arrests than in any comparable period before. To a greater extent than in the 1940's the largest and most prolonged strikes, accounting for the major proportion of workers involved and time lost, were actions carried out more or less coolly and calmly, for tangible objectives, after protracted negotiation and conciliation and a rational assessment of potential gains and losses.

Even those strikes which were technically illegal under prevailing labour disputes legislation, mainly "protest" or "wildcat" strikes in violation of union agreements, and strikes for new agreements that broke out before legally required conciliation procedures had been completed, did not for the most part exhibit much in the way of bitterness, extreme

dissatisfaction or unrest. For one thing, a high proportion of illegal "wildcat" strikes during the 1950's was in highly seasonal industries such as logging and construction work. In such industries the tenure of jobs on temporary projects was often too short for resort to protracted arbitration proceedings to be practical as a method for settling issues. Wildcat strikes in such situations may have been, therefore, the most rational and efficient way to settle such issues as payment for travel-time to and from jobs, quality of food and lodgings, and discharge of employees for alleged incompetency. A series of wildcat strikes under such circumstances therefore did not necessarily indicate a condition of widespread hostility and resentment to the employer, smouldering discontent or explosive unrest building up to bitter and protracted shutdowns, as they often did, in previous years, in such industries as coal, textiles, and motor vehicles.

Again, as evidence that widespread labour unrest was lacking during most of the 1950's, there were no discernible "waves" of strikes on a national scale, recurrently mounting to "peak" years of widespread shutdowns, such as had occurred in 1903, 1912, 1919, 1934, 1937, 1943 and 1946. As in the 1920's, the years in which numbers of workers involved or man-days lost in strikes reached a peak were accounted for by one or two unusually large strikes in a particular industry and in a particular region or province. Such strikes, as the following tables indicate, generally did not coincide sufficiently in any one year to constitute anything that could be considered a nation-wide wave of industrial unrest. The duration and termination dates of union agreements varied considerably as between industries and regions. And, as suggested earlier, most negotiations conducted for new agreements were more or less "tailor-made" to apply to a particular industry or company in a particular regional context, rather than being formulated in response

to social or economic developments emanating out of a broad national or international context. This seemed to be the case particularly in the most industrialized and diversified province, namely Ontario, which over the preceding decade or more had accounted for a disproportionate share of the industrial conflict that Canada had experienced.

Albert Rees, in the detailed statistical study discussed earlier, had found a high degree of correlation between cycles of industrial unrest and conflict and the general business cycle in the United States. More specifically he found that, over a period of several decades in the United States, strike "peaks" preceded peaks in business cycles by about five months on the average. 25/ Canada during the 1950's underwent two distinct cycles of expansion and temporary stagnation or recession. Only in British Columbia, however, for reasons discussed below, did there appear to be any direct relationship between fluctuations or "waves" of industrial unrest, as manifested in strikes, and those of the economy generally.

The distinct phases of the "business cycle" that Canada went through may be outlined briefly as follows: The first postwar recession following the inflationary boom of the late 1940's occurred in late 1949 and early 1950. Then the economy, as noted, experienced another brief period of inflation and rapid growth during late 1950 and through 1951 following the outbreak of the Korean War. Output and employment continued to grow, though at a reduced rate, during 1952 and 1953 as the economy levelled off after adjusting to the new demands incurred by the Korean War. A brief but relatively severe recession developed during late 1953 and 1954 when, for the first and only time since World War II, national income in current dollars fell below the preceding year's level. The economy

recovered rapidly during 1955 and reached a new peak in output and employment during the boom period of late 1956—early 1957. It was marked by an unprecedented level of investment in Canada, particularly of United States capital for large new resource development. The boom ended by mid-1957 and another relatively severe recession developed during 1958 when unemployment reached a record postwar level of more than 7 per cent. There was a limited and brief recovery during 1959. Then the economy during 1960-61 again levelled off into a period of relatively severe recession and unemployment at 1958 levels.

As may be seen from the table below there was no discernible pattern of strikes, over Canada as a whole, that coincided to any significant degree with these cyclical fluctuations in the economy. Indeed, counter to the usual picture the largest number of strikes after 1951, and the largest total of man days lost in strikes since the 1946 peak, occurred in the recession year of 1958.

Strikes and Lockouts in Canada—1950-59 26/

<u>Year</u>	<u>Strikes and Lockouts</u>	<u>Workers Involved</u>	<u>Man Days (in 000's)</u>	<u>Percent of Working Time</u>
1950	160	192,083	1387.5	.15
1	258	102,793	901.6	.09
2	219	112,273	2765.5	.29
3	173	54,488	1312.7	.14
4	173	56,630	1430.3	.15
5	159	60,090	1875.4	.19
6	229	88,680	1246.0	.11
7	245	80,695	1477.1	.13
8	259	111,475	2816.8	.25
9	216	95,120	2226.9	.19

A second table, showing major strikes accounting for losses of 300,000 or more man-days is presented below. Each of these

Large Strikes in Canada—1950-59 27/

<u>Year</u>	<u>Industry</u>	<u>Province</u>	<u>Workers Involved</u>	<u>Man Days (in 000's)</u>
1950	Railways	All provinces	128,000	1,000.0
1952	Textiles	Quebec	5,868	350.0
1952	Logging and Lumber	B.C.	33,500	1,035.0
1954	Motor Vehicles	Ontario	7,765	616.0
1955	Motor Vehicles	Ontario	13,800	1,500.0
1957-8	Pulp and Paper	B.C.	5,565	504.1
1957	Aluminium Smelting	Quebec	6,200	5,220.0 ?
1958	Steel	Ontario	8,077	481.6
1958	Bldg. Construction	Ontario	15,000	448.8
1958	Nickel Min. and Smelting	Ontario	14,500	697.5
1959	Logging and Lumber	B.C.	27,000	1,240.0

accounted for a large fraction, in some cases one-half or more, of total man-days each year. Again, there appears to be little or nothing in the way of a cyclical pattern to the shutdowns. A cyclical pattern likewise fails to appear even if the sample is broadened to include all "large" strikes involving more than 5,000 workers and or more than 100,000 man days lost, as in the table below.

Large Strikes (More than 5,000 Workers and/or
100,000 Man Days Lost) 1950-59

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Province</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Number Workers</u>	<u>Number Man Days</u>
<u>1950</u>				
Automobiles	Ont.	Oct. 2-3	8,632	3,200
Automobiles	Ont.	Nov. 22-3	10,500	7,000
Railways	All provs.	Aug. 22-31	128,000	1,000,000
<u>1951</u>				
Coal	N.S.	Aug. 27-30	10,000	25,000
Tobacco Mfg.	Ont. & Que.	Aug. 14-Sept. 25	3,690	103,000
Sewing Machine Mfg.	Que.	June 6-Sept. 4	2,400	135,000
Automobiles	Ont.	Dec. 3-14	8,800	100,000

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Province</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Number Workers</u>	<u>Number Man Days</u>
<u>1952</u>				
Construction	N.S.	May 26-July 2	5,000	125,000
	B.C.	June 6-Sept. 18	3,000	152,000
Logging & Lumber	B.C.	June 16-July 30	12,000	365,000
	B.C.	June 16-July 30	21,500	670,000
Fishermen	B.C.	July 21-25	6,000	24,000
Rubber Mfg.	Ont.	June 3-Sept. 27	1,350	108,000
Rayon Mfg.	Que.	May 10	702	110,000
Textiles	Que.	Apr. 2-July 7	5,868	350,000
Automobiles	Ont.	Feb. 17-20	9,000	18,000
<u>1954</u>				
Fishing	B.C.	June 20-28	5,620	44,900
Farm Implements	Ont.	Sept. 11-Nov. 29	2,500	136,000
Construction	Que.	Sept. 13-Nov. 8	4,000	145,000
Automobiles	Ont.	Oct. 10-Jan. 3, 1955	7,765	616,000
<u>1955</u>				
Aircraft		July 11-Nov. 14	1,940	168,000
Autos, Diesel Motors & Appliances		Sept. 19- Feb. 20, 1956	13,800	1,453,000
<u>1956</u>				
Coal Mining	N.S.	May 7-8	5,237	5,500
<u>1957</u>				
Coal Mining	N.S.	Sept. 25-30	5,286	15,660
Fishing	B.C.	June 24-July 20	5,500	77,000
Metal Mining	Que.	Mar. 10-Oct. 15	964	108,927
Pulp & Paper	B.C.	Nov. 14-Feb. 4, 1958	5,565	504,095
Metal Smelting	Que.	May 17-Sept. 19	6,200	522,000 ✓
<u>1958</u>				
Metal Mining & Smelting	Ont.	Sept. 24-Dec. 26	14,500	677,500
Primary Steel	Ont.	Aug. - Nov.	8,077	481,570
Construction	B.C.	Mar. 4-May 1	4,000	119,000
Construction	Ont.	Sept. 11-Nov. 6	15,000	448,800
<u>1959</u>				
Government Employees	B.C.	Mar. 13/few hours	11,500	2,880
Textiles	Que.	Sept. 27	1,800	116,570
Fishermen	B.C.	July 25-Aug. 8	5,000	60,000
Logging & Lumber	B.C.	July 6-Sept. 14	27,000	1,240,000
Logging & Lumber	Nfld.	Jan. 17-March 31	1,500	93,000
		Dec. 31/58-Mar. 16	1,360	85,680

The Cyclical Pattern of Conflict in
British Columbia—1950-59. 28/

For a number of complex reasons discussed at some length in an earlier chapter, a disproportionate incidence of strikes and other overt manifestations of labour unrest, particularly of the more turbulent variety, occurred in British Columbia during the first three decades of this century, relative to the size of the labour force and of union membership in that province.

This was no longer true of the 1950's except in terms of average size of strikes and of time-loss. True enough, British Columbia accounted for almost 15 percent of all strikes, more than 15 per cent of all workers involved, and about 21 per cent of all working days lost over Canada as a whole during 1950-59, while the non-agricultural paid labour force in that province accounted for only 10 per cent on the average, of Canada's total over this period. On the other hand British Columbia, as the most highly unionized province in the country, accounted for about 15 per cent of all union members during the 1950's. It did, however, account for 10 out of the 36 or about 28 per cent of the large strikes of more than 5,000 workers and/or more than 100,000 man-days lost during 1950-59. As regards total time loss, average size and average duration of strikes, therefore, the pattern of strike activity in British Columbia did differ widely from that of Canada generally during the decade of the 1950's as a whole.

Within this period there was also a pronounced cyclical pattern of strike activity in British Columbia that diverged sharply from the pattern in other provinces. This appears to have been due to the unusually rapid but unstable growth of the British Columbia economy during the 1950's,

coupled with its extreme dependence upon a few industries that were, and are, particularly vulnerable to fluctuations of the business cycle and to the uncertainties of foreign trade.

Strikes in British Columbia during the 1950's were extremely concentrated in their impact in certain years and in certain industries. In 1952 and 1959, for instance, that province alone, with about 15 per cent of all union members in Canada, accounted for about 50 per cent of all workers involved in strikes and 60 per cent of all man-days lost over the nation as a whole. And, as may be seen from the table below, only two industries—lumber and construction—having about 28 per cent of all union members in British Columbia, accounted for about one-half of all strikes and of workers involved, and three-quarters of all man-days lost, in the province. Characteristically, construction accounted for a disproportionate share of all strikes and a less than proportionate share of workers involved and of man-days lost, while lumber, except as regards number of strikes, was decidedly the reverse, as may be seen from the following table. It should be pointed out, of course, that due to the fragmented structure of unionism and collective bargaining in the construction industry, the number of workers indirectly involved in strikes, in the sense of being rendered unemployed, generally exceeded by far the number directly participating in strikes.

TABLE 1

STRIKES AND LOCKOUTS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA—1949-1950*

Industrial categories in B.C.	Percentage total paid labour in B.C.	Percentage total union membership in B.C.	Strikes		Strike participants		Man days of employment lost		Average duration (days)
			Number	Percentage of total in B.C.	Number	Percentage of total in B.C.	Number (000)	Percentage of total in B.C.	
Logging and lumber	19	15	71	22.2	77,046	48.4	2,671	66.2	35.
Construction	8	13	78	24.4	11,536	7.2	262	6.5	23
Sub-Total, two industries	27	28	149	46.6	88,582	55.6	2,933	72.7	33.1
All other industries	73	72.2	171	54.4	70,310	44.4	1,099	27.3	15.6
All industries	100	100	320	100	158,892	100	4,032	100	25.4

* Annual Reports for the years 1949 to 1959 inclusive, Department of Labour, Province of British Columbia.

A further breakdown of these broad statistics revealed two distinctly different patterns of strike activity within these two industries. Annual Reports of the provincial Department of Labour from 1949 to 1959 inclusive indicated that, in both the lumber and construction industries in British Columbia, a large majority of strikes was in the unauthorized or "wildcat" category—specifically, 47 "wildcat" strikes (compared with 24 "interest" strikes) in lumber, and 45 (compared to 33) in construction. Indeed the prevalence of illegal "wildcat" strikes in these two industries provided the main impetus and alleged justification for the punitive measures enacted by the British Columbia legislature in the latter 1950's. "Wildcat" strikes, however, as noted before, with few exceptions were small and of brief duration. In virtually all industries, including lumber and construction, the less frequent "interest" disputes, in the legal or authorized category, accounted for the overwhelming proportion of strike participants and man-days of employment lost. The lumber and construction industries in British Columbia each experienced 13 strikes of more than one month's duration during 1949-59. Of these, there were eight strikes in the lumber industry and seven in the construction industry that lasted for more than two months.

So much for the pattern. A large number and variety of factors could be offered as explanations for one or other of these aspects of industrial conflict in British Columbia during the 1950's. Some of these were, and are, more or less peculiar to the main industries involved, and some peculiar to the special regional context in which these industries carried on their operations. Some of the broader social and economic forces operating with special effect in British Columbia were analyzed at some length in earlier chapters. The most important and specific set of factors accounting for the peculiar pattern of industrial conflict in British Columbia

during the 1950's derived from important and drastic changes in basic industrial and organizational structure that the province experienced immediately prior to and during that decade.

Metropolitan Vancouver, as one of Canada's major seaports and the terminus for nearly all of the western region's major transportation and communication facilities, has exerted a degree of centralized control over British Columbia's economic life probably greater than metropolitan centres in other provinces. This has been most immediately apparent in such fields as credit and finance, wholesale trade and distribution, and special professional or technical services, as well as in corporate managements and trade unions. The trend towards larger-scale and more centralized organization was particularly pronounced in the lumber and construction industries during the 1950's, due primarily to the number of huge new industrial or resource-development projects, the operations of which extended, directly or indirectly, over the whole province.

This trend, in turn, encouraged the development of centralized industry-wide or multi-employer bargaining between unions and managements to a degree not usually found elsewhere in Canada. This was one of the most important factors that helped explain the unusually large proportion of workers that became unionized, and the unusually long average duration of strikes, in British Columbia. Broadening the scale of bargaining tended to reduce the number of "interest" strikes that developed over the negotiation of new agreements, but when they did occur they tended to be larger and more prolonged than before.

The trend towards large centralized organizations and industry-wide bargaining also helped to explain the high prevalence of "wildcat"

strikes, particularly in lumber and construction. Grievances and conflicts have tended to be frequent in such industries for reasons discussed at length by Kerr and Siegel. Many of the major construction and forest products development projects during the 1950's were carried out in remote areas in which working and living conditions were often unpleasant, and all sorts of difficulties, irritations, and misunderstandings arose. Often the Vancouver headquarters of both unions and employers were too distant to supervise or service their subordinates effectively and to settle disputes quickly when they developed. Common grievances arising on the job tended then to develop into unauthorized or wildcat strikes, particularly on temporary projects in which workers were employed for only a few weeks at a time and which, therefore, could not wait for protracted investigation and arbitration.

The final and most important factor accounting for the high incidence of industrial conflict in British Columbia, and particularly the heavy losses incurred in large and prolonged "interest" disputes, was the rapid but uneven pattern of economic growth that that province experienced during the 1950's. This arose, of course, from the basically unstable nature of the British Columbia economy, specialized as it was, and is, in a few resource-based industries producing largely for shifting and uncertain export markets.

Construction played a central role both in the erratic course of the British Columbia booms and recessions and in the comparatively turbulent state of industrial relations in that province during the 1950's. Maladjustments and conflicts were more frequent and intense within the construction industry of British Columbia than in other provinces because

of the relatively greater magnitude of the construction boom in British Columbia, coupled with its greater instability in the province during the 1950's. The annual volume and value of construction expanded far more in British Columbia than over Canada as a whole during the first half of the decade, specifically by 137 per cent as compared to 92 per cent from 1951 through 1957. Within this broad trend of expansion the fluctuations in construction activity were far more extreme in British Columbia. During boom periods construction expanded far more rapidly in this province, e.g. by more than 28 per cent in British Columbia as compared to less than 11 per cent in Canada in 1955 over 1954, and by more than 45 per cent as compared to less than 25 per cent in 1956 over 1955; and during recession years it contracted far more **severely**, e.g., 14.5 per cent for British Columbia as compared to less than 6 per cent for Canada as a whole in 1953 from the 1952 level, and by more than 25 per cent as compared to only 2.3 per cent for Canada during 1958 as compared to 1957. A large part of this expansion and unevenness in growth could be accounted for by huge new industrial and resource development projects that were carried out intermittently.

This "lumpiness" in investment tended to have further disturbing effects on industrial relations in construction in the province. Large firms handling multi-million dollar projects competed feverishly for labour in boom periods, and offered wages and fringe benefits higher than the smaller construction companies, or the general public, could afford over the long pull. In disputes with major building trades unions in the middle of major projects, the larger concerns were able and willing to make overly generous concessions in order to win "peace at any price". The main repercussions were felt in the subsequent periods of decline, after completion of a series of major projects. Once a standard had been set by a minority

of unions during the height of a boom, attempts by other organizations to win comparable wage increases came up against a ceiling of stable or falling prices during the recession. Thus, as noted earlier, the biggest and most prolonged "interest" disputes in the history of the construction industry in British Columbia occurred during 1952 and again in 1958-59, after the peak booms of 1951 and 1956-57. And practically all of these strikes were in the building section of the industry and in major metropolitan centres like Vancouver, not in large out-of-town projects in the engineering category. Practically all "wildcat" strikes, on the other hand, occurred in the latter.

These main developments in the construction industry in British Columbia, the uneven rates of wage increases and the disparities and conflicts they generated, had particularly strong repercussions in the lumber industry and appear to have been the main immediate cause of the largest and most protracted shutdowns in that field. The complicated interrelationships between the two industries, particularly as regards labour and union organizations, were provocative of maladjustment and conflict. Certain broad similarities in conditions of employment, on the one hand, led workers in the two industries to look upon themselves as comparable, each group being within the other's "orbit of coercive comparison". Both industries were and are largely in the capital goods category and their workers were particularly vulnerable to seasonal and cyclical fluctuations in investment, output and employment. There was a similar range and variety of skills between the two main groups and a number of occupations, particularly mechanical work and maintenance were virtually identical in logging sawmilling, and construction. This factor led, incidentally, to numerous jurisdictional disputes. And

finally, on the Pacific Coast there had been intense competition for leadership and prestige, and at times bitter rivalry, between the International Woodworkers of America and certain major building trades unions.

The two industries differed markedly, on the other hand, as regards such matters as the size and nature of their respective markets, structures and techniques of production, and elasticity of demand for labour. Equal or similar collective bargaining demands in the two industries, therefore, came up against different price and cost conditions and different employer attitudes, degrees of power, and policies. In general the Woodworker's union, while under pressure from its members to seek gains comparable to those won by the main unions in the construction industry, was weaker in bargaining power and was faced with a group of larger and more unified employers who had stronger incentives, and greater financial resources, to resist the union's demands. Wage increases for construction workers, consequently, were far larger than for lumber workers during the 1950's, and on those occasions where the latter made serious efforts to achieve parity with the former, protracted industry-wide shutdowns resulted.

Because of these interrelationships and invidious comparisons, major disputes and strikes in the lumber industry tended to follow closely on major disputes and settlements in construction. And, for reasons noted earlier, disputes in both industries tended to concentrate in periods following major booms. The very size of the labour force employed in lumber production, and its extreme importance to the provincial economy, however, meant that, if need be, extraordinary measures would be taken to try to avoid industry-wide strikes. The eight-week strike of 1952 alone accounted for more man-days lost than in all other industries in the

province combined from 1949 to 1956 inclusive. A threatened strike in 1957 was averted only by last-minute intervention of the Premier of British Columbia. Another in 1958 was prevented only by a combination of depressed lumber markets and prices, and a long closure of the forests due to fire hazard, coupled with extensive third-party intervention. An even more protracted and costly strike than in 1952 finally developed in 1959 after lengthy mediation procedures.

The major wage disputes, strikes, and settlements in building construction and lumber had their impact on other industries and occupational groups. The lumber industry particularly, because of its central importance to the provincial economy, and to the large size and prominence of the International Woodworkers of America, tended to be the main "pattern setter" for other unionized industries. And major disputes in these other industries, including the protracted and costly shut-down of the pulp and paper industry during 1957-58, the unusually large strikes in the fishing industry in 1952, 1954, 1957 and 1959, and even one might postulate, the brief province-wide strike of civil servants in 1959, were generally linked, directly or indirectly, to those in lumber and construction.

Another interesting feature of British Columbia's experience during the 1950's was the degree to which the cycle, or trend, in provincial government legislative policy governing labour disputes paralleled, or rather responded belatedly to, the cycles of industrial conflict described above. Apparently such legislation proved ineffective for the most part in achieving its main announced objective, that of preventing or reducing the incidence of strikes.

The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act (ICAA) of British Columbia, 1947, had been passed largely in response to the wave of large and protracted strikes that had engulfed the nation, and the province, in the immediate postwar period. It was also passed, of course, in anticipation of the provinces' again assuming prior jurisdiction over labour matters once the wartime emergency had been officially declared ended, which it finally was in mid-1947. The ICAA incorporated most of the provisions of P.C. 1003, the wartime federal statute, with a few additional clauses designed to further curb unions' freedom of action in strikes. One was the requirement of a government-supervised secret ballot as to acceptance or rejection of conciliation boards' reports before strikes could be undertaken. This was enacted largely to meet the argument that union members or employees tended to be intimidated into supporting a strike where the decision was taken in a "show-of-hands" vote in open meetings, an hypothesis that was based on somewhat dubious assumptions. A second clause provided for fines and imprisonment in cases of illegal strikes or lockouts that occurred in violation of union agreements, or before the required conciliation procedures had been completed. An amendment to the ICAA in 1948 further provided that, after a strike was under way, a majority of employees having voted by supervised secret ballot to support or reject a conciliation board's award, the Labour Relations Board could at any time conduct another secret ballot among the strikers as to acceptance or rejection of any new offer by the employer(s) involved. This provision met particularly strong opposition from union spokesmen on the grounds that it presented opportunities for attempting to drive a wedge between union leaders and their rank-and-file.

The ICAA, as amended, came into full effect during 1948 when industrial conflict reached a low point in British Columbia, as elsewhere in

Canada. From then on there was a mounting incidence of strikes in the province, together with a burgeoning list of disputes submitted to conciliation officers and boards under the two-stage procedure required under the ICAA. The administrative and conciliation machinery set up under the Act virtually broke down in the peak year of disputes and strikes in the province in 1952. There was mounting agitation and pressure from prominent business groups and their supporters for new legislation to impose new curbs on the activities of organized labor. British Columbia's labour troubles became a major election issue and contributed to the defeat of the incumbent Liberal-Conservative coalition and the election of the Social Credit government to office in 1952.

The new government set about enacting new legislation to replace the ICAA. In debates in the provincial legislature the Minister of Labour roundly condemned the ICAA, maintaining that it had proven wholly ineffective and incapable of dealing with the problem of industrial conflict, citing statistics concerning strikes and disputes submitted to conciliation officers and boards by way of evidence, and also pointing to the large number of "wildcats" and other illegal strikes that had occurred in violation of the Act.

A new statute, the Labour Relations Act, was passed in 1954 to replace the ICAA. The main changes involved were (1) to make conciliation procedures more flexible, in principle at least. Conciliation boards could be set up at the discretion of the Minister, after recommendations from Conciliation Officers, and the latter's reports and recommendations could be final, as the bases on which strike or lockout votes could be conducted; and (2) to provide additional deterrents to illegal strikes, a clause was

added giving the Minister of Labour power to refer any strike to a Justice of the Supreme Court as to its legality. Where a strike was thereby judged to be illegal, and a union or its leadership held responsible, the Minister could then decertify the union and strip it of its bargaining rights (e.g., recognition; closed or union shop; check-off; etc.). During the five years in which this clause was on the books it was never enforced. On only one occasion did the Minister refer a strike to a Supreme Court judge, but withdrew the case when the strike ended.

The new Act, like its predecessor, was passed during a year of relative labour peace, i.e., the recession year of 1954. Like its predecessor also, it was followed by a mounting wave of industrial unrest and conflict which reached a new record peak of shut-downs and time loss in the province during 1958 and 1959. While, as noted, "interest" disputes over the negotiation of new agreements accounted for the overwhelming majority of workers involved and time lost, illegal "wildcat" strikes also increased during the five years following enactment of the Labour Relations Act, considerably exceeding the number that had occurred during the five years previous to its passage. Again there was rising agitation, lobbying and pressure from prominent business groups for further and more effective curbs on union activities.

Apparently in response to these developments the Trade-Unions Act of 1959 was passed. It was designed essentially to supplement the Labour Relations Act by (1) clarifying the terms on which employers could obtain ex parte injunctions against unions, or groups of workers, engaged in strikes, picketing and boycotts in violation of the Labour Relations Act; and (2) clearly defining unions as "legal entities" that could be sued for damages where proven responsible for such illegal activities.

General

Industrial unrest and strikes in other provinces during the 1950's, as noted earlier, did not follow a distinct cyclical pattern like that in British Columbia. There were, however, a number of developments that were common to all the major industrial provinces. They appear, in retrospect, to have presaged a new trend that was to stand out sharply in the 1960's. These trends are indicated in the table below, in which large strikes are listed by industry.

Large Strikes in Canada by Industry
and Province, 1950-59

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Province</u>	<u>Number</u>
Motor Vehicles & Parts	Ontario	6
Construction	British Columbia	2
	Nova Scotia	1
	Ontario	1
	Quebec	1
Fishing	British Columbia	4
Textiles	Quebec	3
Metal Mining & Smelting	Quebec	2
	Ontario	1
Logging & Lumber	British Columbia	2
	Newfoundland	1
Coal Mining	Nova Scotia	3
Machinery & Appliances	Ontario	1
	Quebec	1
Aircraft Manufacturing	Ontario	1
Railways	All Provinces	1
Tobacco Manufacturing	Ont. & Que.	1
Rubber Manufacturing	Ontario	1
Pulp and Paper	British Columbia	1
Primary Steel	Ontario	1
Government Employees	British Columbia	1
TOTAL		<u>36</u>

First, coal mining, which had dominated the strike picture to a disproportionate degree during the first four decades of this century, fell to relative insignificance during the 1950's. There were, it is true, three "large" strikes in coal mining during the 1950's, each involving more than 5,000 workers. But all three were "wildcat" strikes that lasted for only a few days and involved an insignificant time loss. The sharp decrease in the incidence of strikes in coal was a direct result of the depressed state of, and serious unemployment in, the industry.

Second, a number of extractive industries other than coal mining showed a marked increase in the incidence of strikes during the 1950's as compared to the 1940's. This was notably true of the lumber and fishing industries in British Columbia and to a lesser extent, of non-ferrous mining and smelting in other provinces.

During the early 1930's these extractive industries had accounted for a disproportionate share of strikes and man-days lost, as noted earlier, primarily due to the activities of Communist-led unions in these fields in which workers had suffered unusually severe wage-cuts and other losses during the great Depression. During the 1950's, by contrast, the upsurge of strike activity appears to have been stimulated largely by the rapid growth in export demand for the output of these industries, resulting in high returns to employers and large investments of capital, foreign as well as domestic.

Third, as seen from the table above, outside of the lumber industry in British Columbia the largest strikes, accounting for a disproportionate share of total time loss, continued to be in major fields of manufacturing which had become newly organized during the latter 1930's and early 1940's,

and which also played a dominant role in the immediate postwar wave of industrial conflict. Outstanding among these were the automobile industry in Ontario and textiles in Quebec.

Fourth, the construction industry, for the first time in several decades, again came to play a central role in industrial conflict in Canada. During the pre-war era of 1900-13 as described earlier, it had accounted for a disproportionate share of all strikes, but most of these were relatively small and of short duration due primarily to the fact of localized markets and to the fragmented trade and craft structure of the industry. Periodically, however, there were virtually industry-wide shutdowns in the major metropolitan centres. This pattern was attributed to the special strains imposed on labour-employer relations by the great construction "boom" of the pre-War I era, coupled with the unprecedented number of immigrants, large numbers of whom entered the construction industry as their first area of employment.

Unrest and conflict fell off in the construction industry during World War I, due largely to restricted immigration as well as to reduced construction activity. It flared up briefly during the postwar wave of unrest during 1919-20, then declined subsequently. In relative terms it showed up high during the 1920's only because it had become better organized in a period of general union decline, while strikes in other industries, except for coal, fell to their lowest point. During the 1930's there was a further decline in activity and conflict in the industry, due to its special vulnerability to severe unemployment and depression. Conflict remained at a relatively low ebb in the industry during World War II perhaps due mainly, as in the previous war, to government curbs on construction, to shifts in

large numbers of construction workers into other industries such as shipyards and aircraft, and to the "dilution" of skills incurred by the influx of large numbers of new and largely unskilled workers into the field. Conflict remained at a relatively low level in the industry during the postwar 1940's, despite the rising incidence of strikes in other industries. Perhaps the long attrition of the depression 1930's, and the disruptions and restrictions of the war years, had inculcated more caution and conservatism among union leaders and rank-and-file alike in the construction industry as compared to organized labour in other fields.

The circumstances leading to the dramatic expansion and renewed militancy of unions in the construction industry in British Columbia during the 1950's has been described above. Much the same circumstances applied to the other main centres of industrialization and growth, namely Ontario and Quebec, and, more specifically, the major metropolitan areas of Toronto and Montreal. There was an unprecedented level of new investment in many sectors of the economy during the latter 1940's and 1950's—in new resource development projects and social capital for the communities that developed around them; in new and expanded manufacturing industries and commercial enterprises; in office and institutional buildings and residences in a period when the major cities and metropolitan centres were absorbing an increasing proportion of a rapidly expanding population; and in the vast expansion of highways, seaways and other public works. All these greatly increased the demand for construction workers, such that employment and average hourly earnings of labour in this field increased by considerably more than in any other major industry in the country.

Unions of construction workers in major centres of activity, consequently, despite the fragmented organizational structure of the industry

on both the labour and employer side, were able to grow from small, local bodies into large organizations with an unusual degree of bargaining power in a rising market. The extreme instability of the industry, the markedly cyclical pattern of ups-and-downs in the course of its great expansion, however, coupled with the fragmented and extremely competitive union and employer organizational structures, conduced to an unusually high incidence of conflict. This generalization seems to have applied to British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec alike, and indeed even to Nova Scotia, and particularly to the major metropolitan centres in these provinces. Conflicts and gains emanating from this industry, and in these main centres, appeared to have had wide repercussions on other industries and occupations in each region.

Finally, there were signs that the increasing degree to which governments, both federal and provincial, were intervening in industrial disputes in order to prevent or settle conflicts, was having the effect, incidentally and unintentionally, of widening the areas in which such conflict developed. That is to say, where governments were, directly or indirectly, recommending standards and influencing rates of pay, hours, conditions of work and fringe benefits in industries operating under "free enterprise" and "free" collective bargaining, via compulsory conciliation procedures, they provided a strong and growing inducement for employees of public utilities or publicly regulated enterprises, and of governments themselves, to seek comparable gains through collective bargaining and, if need be, by strike action. Thus the great railway strike of 1950 would seem to have been a logical result of the major disputes, conciliation proceedings, and generous settlements, with or without strikes, that had occurred in other major industries during the latter 1940's. An even clearer case occurred in British Columbia in 1959. It does not seem accidental that the

first strike of civil servants on a province-wide or state-wide scale in the entire history of the North American continent occurred in that province.

The government of British Columbia or more specifically, the Premier, had intervened to an unusual degree in attempting to prevent and settle major strikes in the lumber pulp and paper industries during 1957-59. But throughout the decade the government had refused to recognize or bargain collectively with the main union of provincial civil servants. At the same time it refused to make public a special report on collective bargaining in the civil service written by Professor A.W.R. Carrothers of the University of British Columbia Law Faculty. The short strike of 1959 was an unsuccessful attempt to force the government's hand on this issue.

Strikes during the decade reached minor "peaks" of intensity during the recession year of 1958 and the partial recovery of 1959. Then, during the new period of recession and rising unemployment in 1960-61, their incidence fell to the lowest point since the later 1940's, in British Columbia and over Canada as a whole. In this respect at least there was one sort of "wave-in-reverse" that was common to all regions of the country.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE SOARING AND SEARING SIXTIES:

1960-66

CYCLICAL PATTERN OF STRIKES

The pattern of industrial conflict and of labour unrest generally in Canada during the 1960's was sharply in contrast, in many respects, to that which prevailed during most of the 1950's, as described in the preceding chapter.

For one thing, in terms of broad statistical aggregates the pattern of strikes and lockouts followed a pronounced cycle that paralleled closely the underlying cycle of economic growth—a parallel that appeared to be lacking in the previous decade except, as noted, for British Columbia.

Canada as a whole and particularly British Columbia, experienced a relatively serious recession and rising rates of unemployment during 1960-61. From mid-1961 on, the country experienced rapid economic growth and decreasing rates of unemployment. Devaluation of the Canadian dollar in 1962 and a series of unprecedented large sales of wheat to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Communist China provided additional stimuli during 1963-65. By the end of 1966 Canada had achieved new records in gross national product and per capita income, in levels of investment and

export, and other broad indices, far exceeding the previous peak of 1957. The average annual rate of unemployment had been brought below 4 per cent for the first time in more than a decade, despite an unusually rapid growth in the labour force.

By 1965, also, unlike the previous boom of the mid-1950's, there were obvious signs of inflation. The general price level rose by more than 4 per cent per annum during 1965-67. Wage rates, unit labour costs and prices, which had risen less rapidly in Canada than in most other western countries during the latter 1950's and early 1960's, rose more rapidly from 1965 on, causing alarm in some circles.

The broad pattern of industrial conflict, as noted, followed a course closely paralleling these developments. The decade began, during 1960, with the smallest time loss from strikes and lockouts (i.e., 738,700 days) since World War II and the number of strike participants (i.e., 49,408) was smaller than in any years since World War II with the exception of 1948 and 1949. From 1960 on, strikes increased in frequency, numbers involved and time lost, in a mounting crescendo that reached a new peak on all three counts during 1966, as indicated in the table below. The figures for that year were 617 strikes, 411,459 workers involved and 5,046,950 man-days lost, as compared to 226, 138,914 and 4,515,030, respectively, for 1946. It should be noted, however, that comparatively speaking, the strike wave of 1966 was less intensive, in some respects, than in 1946. Total employment and union membership by 1966 were both more than double what they had been 20 years earlier. The "membership involvement ratio" was higher than in the previous period, in so far as the number participating in strikes was almost three times as high. On the other hand, the average

duration of strikes in 1966 was far shorter than in 1946 (i.e., 12 days as compared to 32) and percentage of total working time lost far less (i.e., 0.17 percent as compared to .54 per cent). In brief, strikes during 1966 were relatively more numerous, and on the average far larger, but much shorter in duration, than they had been two decades earlier.

Strikes and Lockouts in Canada

1960-65 1/

Year	Strikes (number) during year	Workers Involved	Man Days Lost	Percentage of Estimated Working Time	Average Duration (days)
1960	274	49,408	733,700	0.06	15
1961	287	97,959	1,335,080	0.11	13
1962	311	74,332	1,417,900	0.11	20
1963	332	83,428	917,140	0.07	11
1964	343	100,535	1,580,550	0.11	16
1965	501	171,870	2,349,870	0.17	12
1966	617	411,459	5,046,950	0.33	12

"Large" strikes, arbitrarily defined as those involving more than 5,000 workers and/or more than 100,000 man-days lost, followed a broadly similar pattern. During the 1950's, as noted, they tended to be spread out fairly evenly over the decade, except in British Columbia. By contrast, during 1960-66, they were "bunched" in a pronounced cyclical pattern. As may be seen from the following table, there were 34 such large shutdowns during 1960-66 as compared to 36 during the whole preceding decade of 1950-59 inclusive. Starting with only one in 1960—a relatively small walkout of 1,750 textile workers in Quebec that lasted for three months—the number rose to 8 in 1965 and 11 in 1966. The climax was reached with the second nation-wide railway strike in Canadian history, involving 118,000 workers and 766,090 man-days lost during late August and early September.

Clearly, in contrast to the 1950's, the cycle of strikes that developed during the 1960's constituted a mounting "wave" of nation-wide proportions. And, in line with a broad trend that had become apparent since World War II, or even before, the "action" was increasingly concentrated in the central industrial provinces of Ontario and Quebec, while on the east and west coasts the relative incidence of conflict declined. As the table below shows, during 1960 to 1966 inclusive British Columbia experienced only two of the 34 large strikes, and the Maritime and Prairie provinces none. Ontario accounted for fifteen, closely followed by Quebec with thirteen, two strikes involved both provinces, and two were nation-wide—i.e., the letter carriers' strike of 1965 and the railway workers' strike of 1966.

Furthermore, British Columbia in contrast to Ontario and Quebec, and to the nation as a whole for that matter, experienced a less pronounced cyclical pattern of strike activity in the 1960's than in the 1950's. The two "large" strikes in that province, of 4,732 office employees and lumber workers in 1964, and of 13,390 logging and lumber workers in a brief 12-day strike during June 1966, were relatively minor as compared to the large and protracted shutdowns that had occurred in the lumber, pulp and paper, and construction industries in that province during the late 1950's.

In Ontario and Quebec, by contrast, the strike pattern was more cyclical in character than before, and more so than in British Columbia. More than one-half of the large strikes in these two provinces occurred during 1965-66 alone. There were, in Ontario, three in 1965 and five in 1966, and in Quebec, three in 1965 and four in 1966. The two nation-wide strikes, of letter-carriers and of railway workers, also occurred in 1965 and 1966 respectively and, as brought out below, these appear to have

developed primarily out of conditions or issues centering mainly in these two provinces.

The long-term trend toward concentration of strikes, particularly of the large ones, in Ontario and Quebec, was accompanied by a similar concentration of strikes in certain types of industries. The large strikes discussed above are presented, by industry and by province, in the following table.

Large Strikes (i.e., more than 5,000 workers and/or
100,000 man-days) 1960-66 2/

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Province</u>	<u>Number</u>
Motor Vehicles & Parts	Ontario	5
Construction	Ontario	2
	Quebec	2
Automotive Transportation	Ontario	3
Iron & Steel	Ontario	1
	Quebec	1
Non-ferrous mining & smelting	Ontario	1
	Quebec	1
Chemicals	Quebec	2
Textiles	Quebec	2
Printing & Publishing	Ontario	1
	Quebec	1
Hotel Employees	Ontario	1
Aircraft	Quebec	1
Brewery & Soft Drinks	Quebec	1
Hospital Employees	Quebec	1
Liquor Store Employees	Quebec	1
Dept. Store Employees	Quebec	1
Lumber	British Columbia	1
Office Employees	British Columbia	1
Railway Workers	All Provinces	1
Letter Carriers	All Provinces	1

The "heavy" industries centering mostly in Ontario, particularly automobiles, iron and steel, non-ferrous mining and smelting, and chemicals, accounted for the largest number of strikes of any one type or group of industries, as had been the case in the 1950's. Again, as in the 1950's, the construction industry in both provinces accounted for the second largest

number of "large" strikes while, even more than before, it accounted for a disproportionate number of small strikes of relatively brief duration.

A notably new feature of the strike situation in the 1960's, and centering particularly in Quebec, was the number of large or prolonged walkouts of workers of a kind which hitherto has tended to avoid overt industrial conflict—notably teachers and other professional workers, salaried employees of hospitals, liquor stores, hotels, department stores and offices, and across Canada, postal employees.

"Large" strikes, of course, fall far short of telling the whole story and are not necessarily the best index to measure the intensity and pattern of industrial unrest in the mid-1960's. Fully as important in the aggregate, in some respects, were the far more numerous small but often prolonged and bitter disputes that also broke out, particularly, again, among types of workers who hitherto had rarely engaged in overt conflict. These likewise were concentrated to a disproportionate degree in the central provinces, or more particularly, Quebec.

OTHER ASPECTS

The unprecedented scope and magnitude of the strikes that occurred, and the pronounced cyclical pattern they followed, were not the only notable features of industrial conflict in Canada during the mid-1960's. Several other special characteristics have also been the subject of a great deal of attention and speculation by a number of scholars and commentators. 3/ These special features were sufficiently numerous and varied to indicate that the recent wave of industrial conflict in Canada during 1965-66 was much more complex in its causation than a purely economic

analysis, within the traditional framework of the "business cycle", could properly explain. Some of the more outstanding of these are outlined below.

First, in the major disputes of the 1960's that arose over the negotiation of new agreements, wage demands, rather than union recognition or job security, appeared to have a higher priority than was the case during the 1950's. This was particularly true during the inflationary period from early 1965 on. Issues concerning job security and working conditions were more frequently expressed in illegal or wildcat strikes, though an unusually large proportion of these latter was also over wages.

Second, and highly indicative of widespread labour unrest in the 1960's, were the unusually high number and proportion of strikes that were in the illegal "wildcat" category. In 1965 they numbered 149 or about 21 per cent of the total 501 strikes, and in 1966, 210 or about one-third of the total 617. Most such strikes in the 1940's and 1950's, as described earlier, had been relatively small walkouts of brief duration. During the 1960's, however, they included some of the largest and costliest disputes. Outstanding among these were strikes in railways, postal services, trucking, primary steel, and mining and smelting. As Crispo and Arthurs observed in their analysis:

...much of this unrest is characterized by militancy that is less the product of labour leadership than the spontaneous outbreak of rank-and-file restlessness... In some cases the rank-and-file have been rebelling as much against the 'union establishment' as against the 'business establishment.' 4/

Related to the rank-and-file militancy and propensity to engage in wildcat strikes was the unusually high proportion of cases in which union members refused to ratify collective agreements negotiated by their officers.

As Crispo and Arthurs noted 5/, "such refusals are evidence of the waning power of the union hierarchy whose prestige and authority are undermined by repudiation of their negotiating 'successes'".

Third, a notable feature of the strike wave of the mid-1960's was the unusual lengths to which the labour movement appeared willing to go in defiance of law and order. Newspaper editors and other observers were prone to put much of the blame for the turbulence of labour relations on union leaders who, allegedly, incited unrest and illegality among their rank-and-file members by openly opposing the law. Numerous strikes were sanctioned by union officials before having gone through legally required conciliation procedures. There was also a concerted campaign by a number of prominent union bodies, particularly in Ontario and British Columbia, against the use of injunctions in labour disputes. Several prominent union officials in both provinces were arrested and sentenced to lengthy prison terms for contempt of court for having sanctioned or participated in illegal strikes or picketing activities in violation of court injunctions.

A fourth feature of the industrial relations scene in Canada during the 1960's was the greater frequency and intensity of inter-union rivalry and conflict. There was an unusually high incidence of "raiding" and of breakaway movements. Dissatisfaction and unrest were expressed in many cases among rank-and-file members, and less frequently among local union leaders, in individual or en bloc defections to join rival unions or to establish new organizations to compete with the old. This appeared to be the case particularly in the province of Quebec, where the Confederation of National Trade Unions, (CNTU) won certification over numerous groups of workers from national or international unions affiliated to the Canadian Labour Congress.

Inter-union rivalry tended to exacerbate relations with employers and to generate conflict. As Arthur Kruger observed:

In Quebec, the CNTU has found it easier to add to its ranks by raiding the CLC affiliates than by organizing the unorganized. The Quebec-based CNTU has had remarkable success in winning over members of rival unions by capitalizing on the sentiment against American domination of the Internationals, on Quebec nationalism, the laxity of some CLC unions in servicing their Quebec locals, and the notable wage gains recently won by some of the CNTU affiliates. The CLC unions have responded by competing with their rivals in demonstrations on militancy in the interest of union members. 6/

There was also evidence of increasing strain and conflict between and among the Canadian Labour Congress and some of its affiliated bodies, as well as between various international union affiliates and their Canadian subsidiaries. This became particularly apparent in late 1965 and early 1966 when a "general" strike threatened to develop in British Columbia in support of a dispute involving oil refinery workers.

And finally, there was a mounting incidence of violence and illegality in labour disputes in Canada during the 1960's. In a cross-country survey of "Violence in Labour Conflicts" 7/ quoted earlier, it was found that there were, during the three-year period 1957-59 inclusive, 9 strikes in various provinces in which one or more of the following had occurred: physical violence or intimidation, property damage, personal injury or death, arrests and convictions. During the seven-year period 1960 to 1966 inclusive there were no less than 75 such disputes. Seventeen occurred in 1964 alone and 13 in 1966. Of the total, 46 occurred in Ontario and 24 in Quebec, while British Columbia experienced only two, the Prairie provinces three, and the Maritimes, none. Again, as in the late 1950's, there were strikes in which deaths occurred. 8/

On the face of it, then, industrial relations in Canada in the 1960's seemed to be reverting to a pattern more characteristic of an earlier decade, such as the 1930's, though under quite different environmental circumstances.

SPECIAL CASES

A number of the more highly publicized labour disputes during the 1960's featured several, and in a few cases practically all, of the behaviour-patterns outlined above. The strikes described briefly in the accounts that follow are arranged in a more-or-less chronological sequence to illustrate some of the main sources and manifestations of industrial unrest in the current decade.

1960-64

Some of the most bitter and violent strikes during the early 1960's, as in the late 1950's, occurred in relatively low wage and economically underdeveloped areas. This was notably the case with packinghouse workers in Brandon, Manitoba in 1960, and pulpwood-cutters in the Kapuskasing area of Northern Ontario in 1963.

A number of the most protracted conflicts during the early 1960's also tended to focus on such issues as union jurisdiction and job security, particularly in efforts by workers to protect themselves against displacement arising out of technological changes initiated by employers or against competition from non-union labour. Outstanding among these were the strikes of construction workers in the Toronto area in 1960 and 1961, and the long strike of printers and mailers against the three main Toronto newspapers, which began in 1964. The emphasis on job and union

security, as noted in the previous chapter, was perhaps a reflection of the high rates of unemployment and in some cases the "new toughness" management had developed in the later 1950's.

Brandon Meat Packers

One of the most protracted and violent labour disputes during the early 1960's was a small strike of 103 employees of Brandon Packers Ltd., which lasted from February 29 to August 30, 1960. 9/ The turbulence of this dispute was of such a scale as to lead to the appointment of a special Royal Commission of Inquiry under Mr. Justice G.E. Tritschler. The Report of this body recounted a long list of incidents of violence in the course of the strike. 10/ The union involved, the United Packing-house Workers, engaged in mass picketing in an attempt to keep the plant from operating. Picketing involved "taunts, threats, egg throwing, rock throwing, nail strewing on roads, obstruction and assault." Non-striking employees allegedly were "followed to and from their homes as part of a plan to terrorize them." The struck company experienced considerable property damage, including sugar put into the gas tanks of company vehicles and the burning of company-owned hay stacks. 11/ The strike was finally settled on the basis of a 12 cent per hour increase for 1960 and a further 6 cent increase in August 1961. 12/

The violence and illegality accompanying the strike could be explained in large part by the unusual and frustrating circumstances in which it developed. 13/ The Brandon Packers firm had been a family operation which had maintained reasonably amicable relations with the local union of the United Packing-house Workers of America (UPWA). Under new ownership and a new general manager, employer policy changed in a direction that the local UPWA representatives viewed as being anti-union.

There had been nine frustrating months of bargaining negotiations, beginning on May 29, 1959, preceding the strike. The dispute centred around the efforts of the company, under new management, to change the basis of wage policy. Hitherto the structure of wage rates in the Brandon plant had been geared to that of the packing industry generally in Manitoba, centred in Winnipeg. Rates in Brandon were lower than in Winnipeg, as the former constituted a lower wage area with certain competitive disadvantages in production, transportation and marketing. Wage increases had been kept generally equal or comparable year by year so as to maintain a fairly fixed differential.

The new management sought to change policy to one gearing wage rates in the Brandon plant to those paid for comparable types of work in the local labour market. This policy the union representatives resisted as it would mean widening differentials between the Brandon plant and others in the packing house industry. The management pleaded "inability to pay" and offered minor concessions that were refused by the union negotiating committee. A majority recommendation of a provincial conciliation board that dealt with the dispute reported in favour of the employer. A majority of the employees voted to reject the board's recommendations, and the strike began on February 29, 1960.

On the first day of the strike the managing director of the company announced that all strikers were to be discharged and all non-strikers and newly hired strike-breakers would be guaranteed permanent employment in the plant. There ensued the protracted and frequently violent strike, as outlined above, in the course of which the manager made several efforts to have the local UPWA in Brandon decertified.

A settlement of the strike was finally reached over the heads of the local management and union representatives in direct negotiations between the Brandon Packers' new owners, in Toronto, and the Canadian Director of the UPWA. As well as providing larger wage increases than had been offered earlier, the terms of settlement involved reinstatement of the strikers with full seniority, in conflict with the local managing director's commitments and policies. The owners then found it necessary to discharge this official for refusing to implement the terms of settlement.

From here on the plot began to thicken appreciably. The local manager, on being discharged, announced publicly that the Toronto owners had made a "panic settlement" with the union in order to avoid incriminating disclosures of evidence before the Inquiry Commission under Mr. Justice Tritschler, which had just been appointed. To establish his charges he took, or copied, various documents from the company office files.

The hearings of the Inquiry Commission did indeed disclose a number of fraudulent activities on the part of the owners, extending over a period of several years. Thousands of dollars of the Brandon company's funds had been diverted to other firms belonging to the owners. Evidence was presented to show that company representatives had submitted "false and misleading information" in earlier negotiations with the union, and to the Conciliation Board, in pleading "inability to pay".

Despite the exposé of such misdemeanours by the company, which clearly helped provoke the long and bitter conflict, the Report of the Inquiry Commission branded the strike as a 'conspiracy' on the Union's part.

Residential Construction in Toronto—1960-61

The residential construction industry of the metropolitan Toronto area was the scene of considerable turmoil and violence in strikes during 1960-61. They had been preceded by large work stoppages in 1957 and 1958. The protracted conflict finally led the Ontario government to appoint a special Royal Commission, chaired by H. Carl Goldenberg, Q.C., to investigate and to recommend measures for improving the situation. The Royal Commission's Report 13/ presented the picture of a disorganized and chaotic industry in which conflict, violence and illegality were endemic. The main disturbances were centred in the house and apartment building sector, but they affected all branches of the construction industry. Union representatives maintained that exploitation of labour was the underlying cause of the trouble, while the Toronto Metropolitan House Builders' Association blamed it on "agitation by trade union leaders." 14/

The construction boom in the mid-1950's, coupled with peak immigration, had attracted excessive numbers into residential construction in the Toronto area. By the late 1950's the bulk of the labour force comprised unskilled and semi-skilled Italian immigrants and a high proportion of their contractor-employers came from the same background. Ease of entry into the industry and the resulting cut-throat competition drove many contractors to accept uneconomically low bids and then to exploit their labour.

Unprotected by unions or by effectively administered labour legislation, according to the Royal Commission, the 10-hour day and six-or-seven day week were common in residential construction work. Frequent cases of "kickbacks", short payment for hours of work, and other forms of employer-employee collusion to evade the law were unearthed. 15/

Dissatisfaction with the apparent indifference of the Toronto Building Trades Council towards residential construction led a group of unionists, identified as the "Brandon Hall Union Group", to launch an organizing campaign. Five new union locals were organized among workers in the residential sector. This culminated in a strike, or series of strikes, during August 1960 involving some 6,000 workers representing five building trades.

A renewed organizational drive the following year led, on May 29, to another large strike of some 6,000 workers covering virtually the entire industry. As the Royal Commission's Report observed, the strike was "an instrument for the organization of non-union workers." 16/ While the strikes were in violation of existing labour disputes legislation, union spokesmen could with some justification maintain that they were the only means for counteracting widespread violation of other labour legislation by non-union employers.

Widespread violence accompanied the campaign. Pickets were established around non-union residential projects and there were repeated clashes between pro-union and non-union workers. "Flying squads" of Brandon group members and supporters sought by various means, including alleged intimidation, coercion and violence, to bring about a general work stoppage in the industry. A number of unionists were arrested and prosecuted for their activities. 17/

The 1961 strike finally ended on July 17, when agreement was reached to accept the recommendations of an arbitration board, and on the proposal to appoint the Royal Commission to investigate the special labour problems of residential construction in Metropolitan Toronto. 18/

Great Lakes and Deepsea Shipping

The most widely publicized violence and illegality in labour disputes during the late 1950's and early 1960's were those generated by the campaign of the Seafarers' International Union, under the direction of the notorious Hal Banks, to extend and consolidate its control over workers employed in Great Lakes and Deepsea Shipping. The Report of a special Royal Commission of Inquiry chaired by Mr. Justice Norris listed, in chronological order, 75 examples of intimidation and violence allegedly perpetrated by officials or members of the SIU, mostly against representatives of other unions which it was attempting to dislodge and replace.

Despite the violence and illegality, no serious official measures were undertaken against Banks or the SIU until the early 1960's. Conflict with rival unions for jurisdiction over seamen employed in deepsea and Great Lakes shipping finally had international repercussions and involved the SIU in such a scale of illegality, property damage and violence that the federal government was forced to intervene and take drastic action.

The main conflict began in 1960 when the Canadian Labour Congress ousted the SIU on charges of "raiding" other maritime union affiliates. In 1961 the CLC created the Canadian Maritime Union (CMU) to compete with and, if possible, displace the SIU.

The battle was joined in 1962 when the SIU became deadlocked with the Upper Lakes Shipping Company in negotiations for a new agreement. 19/ The company then recognized the rival CMU and filled the three hundred seamen's jobs in the firm's fleet of twenty-two ships with members of that organization.

From there on the struggle became increasingly violent, encompassing an ever-widening circle of other groups. There were numerous physical brawls between members of the rival unions. The parent SIU in the United States supported its Canadian subsidiary by picketing Upper Lakes vessels in United States ports, and were supported by sympathetic boycotts or "hot cargo" action by the International Longshoremen's Association and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Canadian newspapers carried numerous headline stories of crew members being beaten up when they went ashore in United States ports; of ships returning to Canada with bullet holes and damage from bombs; and so on. At the height of the conflict the SIU succeeded in manoeuvring two ships into position at the Welland Canal to block all traffic through the waterway.

The mounting crisis led to top level discussions between the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of the United States as well as several Cabinet Ministers from both countries. The federal government appointed a special Royal Commission headed by Mr. Justice T.G. Norris to investigate the whole situation and recommend measures to end the strife.

The Norris Report, referred to previously, condemned Banks' administration of the SIU in the strongest terms and recommended that the union be placed under a government-appointed trusteeship. Legislation to this effect was passed by an overwhelming vote in Parliament on October 23, 1963. In an unsuccessful attempt to prevent its passage, Banks led a protest demonstration in Ottawa of 1,500 SIU members who left more than 100 ships idle at the height of the grain-shipping season. Banks was subsequently tried in court and convicted of perjury but escaped by forfeiting \$25,000 bail and fleeing to the United States.

Pulpwood Cutters, Kapuskasing, Ontario—1963 20/

For the first time for almost three decades in Canada a labour dispute was to result in wounding and deaths by gunfire. This occurred in the course of a strike during January and February 1963, of pulpwood cutters employed by the Spruce Falls Power and Paper Company of Kapuskasing in Northern Ontario. Most of the company's pulpwood logs were supplied by about 1,000 men who were boarded and lodged in eight company camps, and the rest were supplied by marginal settlers over a wide area around Kapuskasing who supplemented their earnings by cutting logs on independent contracts with the company.

The employed loggers, members of the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union of the AFL-CIO and CLC, staged an illegal walkout on January 14, in demanding that their agreement with Spruce Falls be linked with agreements with other pulp and paper companies in the region—a demand that the company opposed. The provincial government had delayed in getting conciliation proceedings under way and the men, technically, acted illegally in going on strike before required conciliation procedures had been completed. The company on its part refused to negotiate with the local union as long as the men were engaged in an illegal strike. While on sound legal grounds, the company's position, in the view of some knowledgeable observers, 21/ made settlement of the dispute more difficult and contributed to mounting frustration and violence by the strikers.

The strike apparently did not receive much, if any, support from the community in Kapuskasing or, more specifically, the processing workers employed in the Spruce Falls Company's plant in that town. Picketing of the plant itself was largely ineffectual. The strikers therefore concentrated their efforts on attempting to shut off the flow of logs to the plant.

Their main focus of attention was the supplies produced by the independent settler—contractors. The latter hauled their logs out of the woods and stockpiled them for loading at designated points along the main roads and railway lines in the area for shipment by truck and rail to the plant in Kapuskasing.

It was evident from accounts provided in an official investigation of the dispute that local union leaders had limited control over the strikers. The latter organized their own "raiding parties" to carry out numerous acts of violence and intimidation against non-strikers, particularly settlers, in an effort to prevent logs being shipped to the company's plant. Individual settlers were physically assaulted by strikers; trucks were stopped by union road-blocks and their loads of logs dumped; trucks were damaged and overturned; stockpiles were pulled down; and so on. 22/

A violent and tragic climax was reached in the struggle on February 11, 1963. The main target of attack of the strikers in this instance was the Val Rita Cooperative, which had been organized previously by about 100 settlers to achieve greater economies of operation and to negotiate more effectively with the company. Members of this body stockpiled their logs in bulk at Risor Siding for shipment by rail to Kapuskasing.

There were rumours that a raiding party of strikers planned to attack the stockpile. The cooperative accordingly had some 20 members camp at the siding to protect their stockpile, and the Ontario Provincial Police stationed ten men at the siding to prevent violence. Shortly after midnight on February 11, after a union meeting at which the local executive had clearly warned the members to avoid any violence, a cavalcade of cars arrived at Risor Siding. According to the Attorney General's report to the Ontario Legislature, events developed as follows:

....At about 12.40 a.m. 75 to 80 carloads of strikers (about 400 men) arrived on the scene. They advanced towards the entrance to the property where the wood had been stockpiled. The ten officers on duty warned them to stay off the property. The strikers withdrew momentarily and then advanced in a mass, broke the chain, and began tossing the wood around. The police did not draw their guns although they had received no orders in this regard. They were just using good sense as policemen. At that point some 22 settlers emerged from the cabin and opened fire indiscriminately on the group—strikers and police alike. Two strikers died instantly, another later. Twelve men in all received gunshot wounds (later estimates reduced the number). The police advanced and disarmed the settlers but some of them had already thrown their guns on the ground at their feet. 23/

Subsequently, 20 men, all members of the cooperative, were arrested and charged with non-capital murder on three counts but the charges were later dismissed. Three men were convicted for illegal possession of offensive weapons and fined. Two hundred and twenty-three strikers were charged with rioting and fined on lesser charges of "unlawful assembly". The strike was quietly settled after the shootings when the disputing parties agreed to submit to compulsory arbitration.

The strike, despite its violence, apparently did not result in any heritage of excessive bitterness or continued conflict. Most of the settlers that belonged to the cooperative are now employees of the Spruce Falls company and are members of the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union. 24/

Newspapers, Toronto—1964 25/

Strikes among printing tradesmen employed in newspapers have been relatively rare. When they do occur, however, they tend to develop into bitter and protracted conflicts. Outstanding among these, in Canada, were the three-year struggle of several printing trades in the early 1920's for the forty-four hour week, a campaign that resulted in strikes against

newspapers in various cities and towns across the country; the strike of various locals of the International Typographical Union (ITU) against newspapers in the Southam Company's "chain" during 1946-49; and the strike of the ITU, with the support of the Mailer's Union, against the three major daily newspapers in Toronto, beginning in 1964 and technically still in process.

The strike began over what appeared to be a relatively minor dispute over composing room jurisdiction. It concerned technological changes in the category of "automation" which, from the union standpoint, or more specifically that of the ITU, constituted a long-run threat to the employment prospects of the union's members and of the status and security of the union itself. Apparently the International Executive of the ITU ordered its Toronto local to take a determined stand against any compromise on the point in dispute, "possibly", as C.M. Loopstra suggests, "with a view to making Toronto an international testing-ground on this particular issue." As noted earlier in discussing the strikes against the Southam newspapers, the highly centralized governmental structure and constitution of the ITU give the International Executive virtually the power of veto over decisions of local executives on many issues, even where these are endorsed by unanimous membership votes. Compliance is assured in most cases by the liberal strike pay and pension benefits that the union provides its members.

There had been almost two years of negotiations between the ITU and the three major newspaper publishers without agreement having been reached. The issue of composing room jurisdiction was the sole or major stumbling-block. According to union spokesmen, the employers provoked the strike by suddenly, and unilaterally, changing working conditions in the composing

room. Then they frustrated mediation efforts by the Ontario Department of Labour by deliberately reintroducing, as matters of dispute, twenty-one issues, the terms for settlement of which had previously been agreed upon. Members of the local ITU went out on strike on July 9, 1964 and members of the Mailer's Union walked out in sympathy. They did not win active support from other newspaper and printing trades unions in Toronto.

The newspaper publishers had been preparing for a strike for several months previously by training their supervisory personnel and office staffs to operate complex electronic and printing equipment. The publishers were able to continue operations almost without interruption, despite the walkout. Intense resentment was aroused by the employers' action in recruiting some professional strike-breakers from the United States (seven of whom the federal government subsequently ordered to leave the country). These, however, were temporary employees only. More intense hostility developed when the employers announced that the strikers were to be replaced permanently by new recruits and by strikers who had returned to work.

As picketing of the newspaper plants themselves proved ineffective, the striking unions undertook secondary boycotting and picketing of major suppliers of the newspapers and of establishments that were major advertisers. The unions were frustrated in these attempts by the issuance of court injunctions, followed by arrests and convictions. Union spokesmen complained of "legal harassment."

The first year of the strike was also marked by numerous scattered incidents of intimidation, violence and property damage perhaps mainly as a result of unsuccessful picketing and boycotting. In one case a brick was thrown through the plate glass window of a strike-breaker's home at two

o'clock in the morning. Several new employees were physically assaulted by strikers in parking lots outside the struck newspaper plants. Newspapers were reported stolen out of boxes and carrier-boys' bundles were disposed of at dropping-off points. And so on. A number of arrests were made and criminal charges laid against various strikers.

In the spring of 1965 members of the ITU voted, in effect, to end the strike and return to work under the existing agreement. This was thwarted, however, by the refusal of the publishers to re-hire 27 men who had been put on a "blacklist" for "activities which made them undesirable employees." 26/ Union spokesmen branded this action as an illegal lockout and from then on the dispute became hopelessly deadlocked.

Officially the strike is still in existence and legal picketing continues on a limited scale. An estimated one-half or more of the strikers have left for other employment, mostly in the United States. Most of those left in the picket line are too old to seek other employment, or for various reasons are deemed unemployable. They are maintained by union strike pay of \$100 a week.

1965-66

Strikes in Canada, as noted earlier, increased rapidly in frequency and scope and in the extent of violence and/or illegality as the Canadian economy underwent mounting inflationary expansion during 1965 and 1966. A series of large strikes, as well as new agreements negotiated without strikes, during 1965 established patterns of increasingly large wage increases and other benefits.

A strike of 3,200 liquor board employees in Quebec during late 1964 and early 1965—one of the first of a series of large and protracted walk-outs of public employees in that province—was successful in winning an \$18 weekly pay increase and other concessions spread over two years. Early in the year, in Ontario, large strikes of farm implement workers at the Massey Ferguson plant, and of automobile workers in the Ford and Chrysler plants in Ontario, were settled on the basis of 25 cent to 35 cent hourly wage increases and additional benefits spread over two years. A number of strikes of oil refinery workers employed in the plants of three companies, with operations from Ontario to British Columbia inclusive, was settled on similar terms towards the end of the year. A strike of 3,200 machinists employed by **Canadair** resulted in an overall 12% wage increase. Again, strikes of construction workers in Quebec City and in Toronto during June to August resulted in wage increases ranging from 50 cents to \$1.06 per hour spread over two- to four-year periods. The most highly publicized strike in 1965 was the Canada-wide walkout of more than 12,000 postal workers during July 22 to August 9 which was settled on the basis of wage increases of \$510-560 per annum. 27/

Such developments generated a momentum of rising expectations and demands that reached an explosive point in 1966 in a series of major labour disputes and strikes of unprecedented magnitude, most of which were settled only after wage increases of likewise unprecedented size.

While the wage issue dominated the labour scene during the mid-1960's to a far greater degree than earlier, a number of major disputes did continue to focus on job security and the threat of automation. This was notably true of the oil refinery workers' strike in British Columbia,

in late 1965, that threatened to develop into a general strike, and of the longshoremen's strike in the St. Lawrence in 1966.

Oil Refinery Workers—1965

The strike of oil refinery workers lasted for more than three months, from early September into December 1965. For almost two months it was confined to plants of the British American Oil Company in Ontario, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. Then, on November 5, employees of the Imperial Oil Company refineries in Ioco, in the Vancouver area, also went on strike, and they were followed by employees of Shell Oil in British Columbia and in the prairie provinces. Spokesmen of the union local in Ioco blamed the extension of the strike on the suspension of 35 men and on the alleged refusal of the Imperial Oil company to negotiate a new agreement.

The main issues underlying the disputes were the union's demands for sizeable wage increases, advance notification of plant installation of machines that would displace workers from employment, and various measures to protect employees against dismissals or demotions in status and pay arising from the growing automation of processing operations.

British Columbia rapidly became the main centre of attention in the oil refinery strike as the conflict in that province soon threatened to escalate to the proportions of a general strike.

A leading union official announced that the strike would be extended to all plants in British Columbia and to other plants in Ontario and Quebec if a settlement were not reached within the next few weeks. 28/
The British Columbia Minister of Labour, the Honourable Leslie Peterson,

in turn warned that the provincial government would not tolerate any action that involved a total shutdown of all oil refining facilities in the province. Said he:

I regard the product as essential, much the same as public utilities, and if a work stoppage is going to involve a total shutdown of all plants, then certainly we cannot tolerate that type of action. 29/

Subsequently the Oil Workers union accepted a recommendation from the British Columbia Federation of Labour to postpone the threatened province-wide strike in the oil refining industry.

The day after the strike began at Ioco, a company spokesman announced that the RCMP were investigating alleged tampering with plant equipment that could have led to an explosion. 30/

The effectiveness of the strike was limited by the high degree of automation achieved in the processing and refining of oil.. Spokesmen of the struck companies claimed that they were able to maintain operations at 80 per cent or more of normal capacity as executive and supervisory personnel could, for the time being at least, carry on the jobs hitherto performed by the strikers. The strike, to be effective, therefore, had to depend largely on picketing and boycotting activities to impede the delivery of oil products to customers and of supplies to the plants involved. Such activities, however, were curbed by legal restrictions.

Oil Workers' union pickets stopped work temporarily on the Columbia River dam project when 350 construction workers refused to cross the picket line. The union was subsequently served with a court injunction ordering a cessation of picketing at the site. 31/ The Imperial Oil Company later

obtained an injunction to prevent picketing at its operations in British Columbia other than in Ioco, on the grounds that it had no contractual agreement with the Oil Workers union and that the Ioco refinery was merely a subsidiary of the company. 32/

In the face of such legal barriers to effective picketing, the Oil Workers union in British Columbia sought support from other unions. Representatives of a number of labour organizations held several meetings, under the auspices of the British Columbia Federation of Labour, to discuss the feasibility of a 48-hour general strike in support of the oil workers. Support was reportedly promised by officers of lumber, pulp and paper, building trades, marine, transport and teamsters' unions, among others. 33/ A "strike coordinating committee" was set up to assure that emergencies could be handled and necessary services provided for if and when a general strike were carried out. 34/

These moves evoked strong verbal reactions from spokesmen of the provincial government. The Cabinet met in an emergency session to discuss the threatened crisis. The Minister of Labour and the Attorney General both charged that the proposed general strike was politically motivated, with the connivance of the NDP to embarrass the Social Credit government, a charge which was sharply denied by the Leader of the Opposition. 35/ The Attorney General warned, furthermore, that unions participating in a general strike would be violating the Labour Relations Act and the Trade - unions Act and be subject to damage suits. 36/ The Canadian Manufacturers' Association advised its members to warn their employees of "serious consequences" if they were to participate in a general strike. Subsequently spokesmen of several unions, including the Machinists and the Teamsters, indicated that they would refuse to participate. 37/

Premier W.A.C. Bennett finally intervened to bring a settlement to the dispute with the oil companies and end the threat of a general strike. The terms of agreement included a 35 cent per hour wage increase spread over two years, establishment of a joint labour-management committee to study the impact of automation, and various measures to provide job protection to long-service employees and retraining facilities for those displaced by automation. 38/ These terms became the basis for settling strikes of oil workers in other provinces.

Postal Workers-July-August 1965

The strike of 12,248 mail carriers and postal workers during July 22-August 9, 1965 may on a number of counts be considered one of the most important strikes of the past decade in Canada in terms of its broad impact upon the climate and pattern of industrial relations in this country during the mid-1960's. For one thing, it was one of the largest strikes in the illegal "wildcat" category. It was also the largest one involving government employees and one of the few, in the private or public sectors alike, to occur on a nation-wide scale. The workers involved could be put largely in the semi-skilled salaried clerical or white collar category, an occupational type that hitherto had been assumed to be non-militant and not amenable to effective unionization. The national executives of the two main unions involved exhibited weakness, confusion and indecision prior to and during the strike. These were largely instrumental in encouraging rank-and-file revolt and wildcat strike action by major union locals. These weaknesses in union organization, however, were more than matched by divisions, weaknesses and inconsistencies on the part of the federal government in the course of the dispute, with the result that the strikers won a

resounding victory. There was a consequent erosion of government authority and influence that was to have serious repercussions in subsequent labour disputes of major importance. And finally, the postal workers' strike was important in bringing to the fore the issue of collective bargaining in the federal civil service. This in turn led to the enactment of important, and in some respects path-breaking, new legislation.

The strike developed late in July 1965 over demands by the postal workers' and letter carriers' unions for salary increases of \$660 per annum, improved working conditions, and the establishment of recognized collective bargaining relations with the federal government. The latter, through the Revenue Minister, Honourable E.J. Benson, responded with an announcement of salary increases ranging from \$300-\$360. 39/ The announcement was greeted with loud protests and calls for strike action by local executives and members across the country. The main centres of opposition were metropolitan Montreal and Vancouver, and to a lesser extent, Toronto. These are, of course, notably high wage areas, in unionized industries and occupations at least, and all three areas were undergoing unusually rapid economic growth and wage increases. Relatively, postal workers and letter carriers represented a depressed group. The earnings of postal clerks, for instance, began at \$2,190 and rose to a maximum of \$4,680, while officer maintenance men's earnings ranged from \$3,170 to a maximum of \$3,620 per annum. As an editorial in the Vancouver Sun pointed out, postmen on the west coast received \$3,000 per annum less than firemen or policemen of comparable seniority and \$2,000 less than common labour employed by the city. 40/

The national executives of the two-unions--the Canadian Postal Employees Brotherhood and the Federated Association of Letter Carriers--

expressed dissatisfaction with the federal government's offer but refrained from issuing a call for a nation-wide walkout pending a meeting of the federal Cabinet and a union executive conference. Meanwhile the President of the Postal Employees Brotherhood, Joseph Belland, warned that any walkouts by local unions would be unauthorized and illegal.

Local executives and members of postal workers' and letter carriers, unions nonetheless carried out their threatened strikes. They began in Montreal and in Vancouver on July 22nd. They were soon followed by locals in a number of other cities and towns in Quebec and British Columbia. Promises of support were immediately expressed by local central labour councils in the main cities and of the teamsters', longshoremen and other transport workers' unions. There was not complete consensus, however. Spokesmen for letter carriers across the Prairie provinces and northern Ontario announced that they would not walk off their jobs unless a strike was officially called by the national executive. On the other hand, postal workers in Toronto joined the strike the following day, July 23, completing the tie-up in Canada's three major metropolitan centres. Postal authorities announced an embargo against mailing second-, third- and fourth-class mail over the entire provinces of Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia. 41/

Under such pressures the President of the Postal Workers' Brotherhood threatened to call a nation-wide strike if the federal government did not increase its wage offer.

The federal government, acting through a three-man Cabinet Committee of Revenue Minister Benson, Postmaster General René Tremblay and Solicitor General Lawrence Pennell, attempted to head off the strikes by a somewhat confusing combination of threats, pleas and promises. Mr. Benson stated

at the outset that any walkout would be considered illegal, while Mr. Tremblay warned that the government would apply "old and new rules" to the situation. 42/ (This was apparently in reference to the Civil Service Act clause which states that the government need not rehire a civil servant who has been off the job for more than seven days). Mr. Benson, however, promised that no action would be taken against striking postal workers if they returned to work by Friday, July 23. He warned further that: "Demands of the strikers are not going to be granted through strike action." 43/

These threats were accompanied by a last-minute offer to appoint a special commission to investigate salaries and working conditions and other complaints of the postal workers. Mr. Benson emphasized that the commission's findings would not be binding on either side, that "there was no question of arbitration." He also praised the executive of the Postal Workers' Brotherhood for its "responsible attitude." 44/ It had refrained from calling an official nation-wide strike.

The following day Prime Minister Lester Pearson announced the appointment of Mr. Justice J.C. Anderson as Chairman of a special commission of investigation, and accompanied this with a plea to the striking postal workers to return to their jobs. This was ignored. 45/ The strikes were reported to be one hundred per cent effective in the main centres, despite court injunctions issued to prohibit picketing by postal workers in Montreal and Vancouver. 46/

The Secretary of the Canadian Postal Employees Brotherhood on July 24 called on the federal government to end the three-day walkout with an interim wage increase that would be open to negotiation. It would, he

warned, have to be close to the \$660 increase which the postal workers had sought. 47/ Such an offer was not submitted by the federal government until eleven days later. The strike continued meanwhile and was, belatedly, officially endorsed by the union national executives on a nation-wide scale.

The federal government finally responded with another stick-and-carrot combination. An unnamed "spokesman" for Prime Minister Pearson was reported, on August 3rd, as stating that the government was considering the dismissal of 4,100 striking postal workers in the Montreal area if the situation became critical. He stated further that the Cabinet was considering two major steps: 1) special emergency legislation to end the walk-out and restore mail service; and 2) calling in of army troops to sort and deliver the huge backlog of mail. 48/ Apparently, in response to this threat, the Canadian Labour Congress next day pledged its "utmost support" to the postal workers' cause. 49/

The same day the federal government announced wage increases to postal workers of \$510-550, considerably larger than the original offer but also well below the unions' demands. As recommended by Mr. Justice Anderson, the offers comprised a general increase of \$360 retroactive to October 1, 1964, with further increases of \$150-190 effective August 1, 1965. Prime Minister Pearson also announced that an outside consultant would be hired to examine the Post Office Department's work rules and working conditions, which were a special source of grievance, and that legislation would be established as soon as possible after Parliament reconvened to set up a regular collective bargaining system for civil servants. He accompanied this announcement with the promise, or warning, that: "There will be no departures from any recommendations of Judge Anderson as far as the government is concerned." 50/

Widespread opposition was expressed against the new government offer and the Canadian Press reported on August 5 that "support was building today for a nation-wide snub by Canadian mailmen of the latest government move on postal workers' salaries." Montreal postmen and postal clerks voted overwhelmingly to reject it. 51/ Over the nation as a whole, however, a majority of postal workers voted in favour of accepting the proposals. Subsequently, on August 7, after winning a few additional concessions, the Montreal postal workers voted overwhelmingly to return to work. 52/ This marked the end of any effective opposition and all strike and picketing activity soon ceased.

Teamsters' Strike, Ontario—1966 53/

The large and prolonged strike of some 8,500 teamsters in Ontario during early 1966 helped establish a pattern that was to have considerable impact in the province. In 1965 there had been a "wildcat" strike by members of the Hamilton local. In the negotiations for a new agreement during late 1965 and early 1966, the employers' association insisted on including damage suits, dismissals of certain employees, and other penalties legally arising out of the wildcat strike, as part of the proposed settlement for a new agreement. In addition to the question of penalties arising out of the wildcat strike, another touchy issue was the growing practice of "contracting out" trucking contracts to nominally independent operators, as a means of avoiding the legal requirement of negotiating with the Teamsters' union. This position on the part of the employers' representatives provoked the union representatives to reject the conciliation board's award and undertake a "legal" strike after the required procedures had been gone through. 54/

The strike that developed out of this situation lasted for more than 14 weeks and occasioned intermittent acts of violence and property damage, and several arrests, including that of Ray Taggart, President of the Hamilton local and Chairman of the union's joint negotiating committee.

According to one newspaper summary of the events:

Ontario's trucking strike and lockout has been a thoroughly nasty affair marked by repeated violence and disregard of the law. Among incidents reported since five Teamster locals went on strike in January are these: a shot fired at a foreman for a trucking firm in Hamilton, pop bottles hurled down at trucks from an overpass, pins connecting tractor and trailer removed from several vehicles, a fist-swinging clash with police at Brantford, a flare thrown into a cab of a tractor trailer, tires and tarpaulins slashed, a truck set alight by plastic bags filled with gasoline, and various incidents of common assault. 55/

The main employer organization, the Automotive Transport Association of Ontario, on the other hand, complained of the "impossible position in which (the) trucking industry involved in (the) strike finds itself because of conflict between federal and provincial labour laws..." 56/

A tentative settlement was reached between the union and employer negotiating committees after the strike had gone on for more than twelve weeks. Besides conceding substantial wage increases and reductions in working hours per week, the employers dropped the issue that had been the main stumbling block in earlier negotiations, namely, damage actions and punitive measures arising out of the earlier "wildcat" strike. Damage actions estimated at \$2,000,000 in claims were dropped in return for a token settlement of \$7,500 against the Hamilton local of the union. Individual employers agreed to rehire eight men who had been dismissed for their participation in the wildcat strike. Despite these apparently favourable terms, the membership rejected the proposed settlement and the strike continued. It

did not end until two weeks later, on April 27, 1966, when even more favourable terms were obtained. All told, the strikers each received a \$165 retro-active wage payment, a 70 cent per hour wage increase over two years, and a progressive reduction of hours from 48 to 40 over this same period. 57/

International Nickel Company, Ontario 58/

The largest strike in the illegal "wildcat" category to occur in Canada during 1966 was one involving some 15,767 employees in the International Nickel Company operations in Sudbury, Ontario, during July 14 to August 8. It was followed by a brief legal strike for a new agreement during September 14-17. In both cases the Sudbury workers were joined by an estimated 1,800 employees of the Inco refinery at Port Colborne. In terms of tactics and results, like the teamsters' strike described above, the first strike was important in influencing the pattern of industrial conflict that soon followed in steel and a number of other industries and firms.

In the view of some observers, the suddenness and magnitude of the strike and the apparently extreme and illegal tactics employed were partly a legacy of a history of bitter conflict. For more than a decade and a half the United Steel Workers of America had waged a long and costly campaign to wrest jurisdiction over the Inco operations from the Communist-led International Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers' Union (IMMSWU). It did not finally succeed in this endeavour until the early 1960's. The IMMSWU previously had waged a bitter and protracted strike of 119 days against the company in 1958 and the memory of this unsuccessful struggle still rankled among the men. 59/

The 1966 strike began on July 17th when more than 200 men walked off their jobs in Inco's Levack Mines, some 35 miles from Sudbury, and spread to the company's iron ore recovery plant in nearby Waters Township. The shutdown of the company's mining and smelting operations was complete by the next morning. Thousands of strikers manned the picket lines and executive, secretarial, maintenance and clerical staff were prevented from entering company premises. Some damage to company property was reported. 60/

The strike and picketing activities were not authorized by executives of the Steel Workers Union and were illegal because they occurred while negotiations between the union and company were still in progress and conciliation procedures required under the Ontario Labour Relations Act had not been completed. Union spokesmen, while not condoning the strike and picketing activities, attributed them mainly to the provocative position taken by the company. There had been over 20 meetings, the company had offered what union representatives felt were wholly inadequate wage increases, and had failed to recognize other issues, including a proposed Cooperative Work Study plan as a method for evaluating jobs. 61/

The strike itself was described in one newspaper account as:

...being run more like a wartime military machine than a labour walkout. The strikers are using walkie-talkies and while there is little violence, forays are being made to interrupt company efforts to airlift provisions to supervisory personnel encamped inside plant and mine gates. A large transport-type helicopter has been hired by Inco to shuttle supervisory personnel and provisions into company property. A striker is reported saying that when they find the helicopter they will put it out of commission. The union remains adamant in its stand that the company provoked the walkout.

An already tense atmosphere reached explosive proportions with the arrival in Sudbury, four days after the beginning of the walkout, of several cruisers of Provincial Police numbering 300 in all. The strikers were reported armed with lengths of pipe, clubs and steel bars. 62/ According to another account by a well-known columnist in the Toronto Globe and Mail:

Roads have been blockaded with boulders and pickets; plant gates blockaded with boulders and cars; hydro and telephone lines cut; a man stabbed; a truck carrying food supplies overturned and rolled down a hill. 63/

Company representatives took the not unreasonable position that they would resume negotiations with the union, despite the illegality of the strike and picketing activities, provided that the pickets would permit a specified number of executive and office personnel through the lines. This concession, according to current newspaper reports, was not reached in Toronto until after some 29 hours of discussion. It produced divisions within both the union and management committees over tactics. Some within the management group initially felt that a firm line should be taken and the company should refuse to negotiate further until the illegal strike and picketing were ended. Within the union group there was strong opposition to any concessions that would allow any company personnel to have access to plants and offices. 64/

After agreement was finally reached on this point, the bargaining committee of the union returned to Sudbury from Toronto in an effort to persuade the strikers to permit company personnel to enter the Inco premises. 65/ The strikers finally agreed to this on July 24, the tenth day of the strike, and proceeded to remove barricades across routes of access to company property. 66/

A few days later Inco applied to the Ontario Labour Relations Board for permission to prosecute a selected group of strikers for participating in an illegal walkout. The application was "adjourned indefinitely" by the Board. 67/ Inco's move was interpreted by some union representatives as a "power play" to enhance its bargaining position in negotiations with the union for a new agreement. As reported in one prominent newspaper:

They [union representatives] expressed the fear that Inco would take out an injunction, break the strike and possibly the union in the process, and leave the union facing a law suit for substantial damages as a result of production losses and property damage. 68/

On August 6, after more than three weeks on an illegal strike, a majority of Inco employees voted to return to work and negotiations between the union and company were resumed. Three weeks later the employees, on September 15, voted more than 91 per cent in favour of strike action to win wage increases and other demands. Early in August the company offered an increase of 47 cents an hour in wage increases and fringe benefits and this was later raised to the equivalent of $63\frac{1}{2}$ cents spread over three years. These offers were rejected by the union negotiating committee and the latter was supported by the overwhelming strike vote. 69/

Finally on September 14 a second strike, this time legal, again closed down Inco operations in Sudbury and Port Colborne. It ended after three days in a majority vote of 57% of the membership, after a final company offer estimated to be worth 86 cents an hour, in wage increases and fringe benefits, spread over three years. This, according to current newspaper reports, made the Inco employees "the highest paid group in the Steel Workers Union". 70/

Steel Company of Canada, Hamilton, Ontario—1966 71/

The "wildcat" strike of some 12,500 employees of the Steel Company of Canada during August 4-31, 1966, was strongly influenced by developments in the Inco strike and followed a roughly similar pattern.

As in the Inco dispute, the United Steel Workers Union had been involved in protracted negotiations with the company in seeking substantial increases in wages and fringe benefits. The union demanded parity in earnings for workers in comparable Canadian and United States steel operations. The cost of this was estimated to be in the realm of \$1.20 an hour. Stelco was reported to have offered, at the outset of conciliation board proceedings, the equivalent of a 60 cent an hour spread over three years, which the union negotiating committee rejected. 72/

The strike began on August 4, 1966, apparently as a result of impatience with protracted negotiation and conciliation proceedings. According to current newspaper accounts, it was "sparked" by fewer than 200 workers who roamed the major Stelco plant in Hamilton persuading other workers to leave their jobs. By next morning it had engulfed four plants of the company in Hamilton, involving an estimated 12,500 production workers as well as 3,500 non-union office workers. 73/

The opening stages of the strike were described in rather spectacular terms in a local newspaper account, as follows: 74/

Mob rule shut down the sprawling works of the Steel Company of Canada Limited, putting 16,000 persons out of work. Wildcat strikers defied and mobbed their union leaders, shoved police aside and closed off all access to the company's plant and offices.... The strike appeared to be well organized, but neither the union nor the company could identify those behind it. Some attributed it to young hotheads, others

to communists and still others to a group of Canadian autonomists within the union. 74/

A newspaper account of the next day presented the following picture:

Fist-swinging, gouging strikers fought police outside the Steel Company of Canada plant in Hamilton in the most severe clash in a day of violence. About 500 of its surging mob of 2,000 steelworkers fought with 70 city police reinforced by Stelco Security Guards. The clash, which flared just before 3 p.m. when a striker yelled "scab" at a company supervisor entering the plant, followed these events: (1) Three cars were overturned in parking lots and set on fire. (2) An attempt to move a train loaded with scrap metal into the plant failed when 200 strikers rushed a police line. At least 2 police officers were knocked to the ground and 5 strikers were handcuffed and taken away. (3) A mass sitdown by strikers on Burlington Street near the Stelco plant at one point blocked all traffic. (4) Most of the 29 pickets were arrested after police opened a gap in the picket line during the morning, clearing the way for supervisory and office personnel to enter the plant. 75/

Union officials exerted every effort to end the work stoppage as the conciliation board dealing with Stelco negotiations refused to reconvene while the men were out. The wildcat strike ended after four days when a majority of union members voted to return to work. A new walkout was narrowly averted when the company fired 33 men and suspended 16 others for their part in the wildcat strike.

Conciliation board proceedings finally resulted, on August 18, in a proposed 3-year agreement providing increases in wages and fringe benefits which, according to one prominent union spokesman, would make Stelco employees "the highest paid steelworkers in the world by 1967". The company also agreed to refrain from taking civil action against the union because of the wildcat strike and to review the disciplinary actions taken against 51 strike participants. 76/

Despite these favourable terms, the proposed agreement was rejected by a majority of the 11,000 Stelco employees in a membership vote. Union officials were reported "clearly shocked." Finally, on August 30, a new agreement was ratified that provided a wage increase of 3 cents above the one previously rejected. The total increase in the "wage package" was estimated to be 70 cents an hour. 77/

Construction Industry, Montreal—April 1966 78/

There was an unprecedented volume of heavy construction carried out in and around metropolitan Montreal during 1965-66. The most spectacular project, of course, was Expo 67, but it was matched by huge expenditures for new auto routes, subways, hotels and skyscrapers, and other facilities. This concentrated activity generated an unusually rapid increase in earnings and a corresponding rise in workers' expectations and demands expressed through their unions.

The organizational structure of the construction industry in Montreal is exceedingly complex and potentially vulnerable to large-scale and damaging conflict. Almost one-half of the estimated 50,000 construction workers in Montreal are not unionized. Of the 25,000-30,000 who are union members, about 75 per cent belong to locals of some 20 building trades internationals affiliated with the AFL-CIO and CLC and, in Quebec, the provincial Federation of Labour. The remaining 25 per cent belong to locals of the Confederation of National Trade Unions, or CNTU. Employers are likewise organized in a large number of associations representing different trades and sub-trades, while many are unorganized independent contractors. Under Quebec law, the basic terms of agreements negotiated between the main union and employer organizations in the industry are extended to non-union workers and employers throughout the metropolitan area.

There has been a long history of intense, and at times violent, inter-union rivalry and conflict between affiliates of the CLC and CNTU in many industries in Quebec. They were particularly frequent during the early and middle 1960's and the CNTU, as noted earlier, was successful in winning away a number of local unions from the CLC.

In the construction industry in the Montreal area, however, such conflict had been avoided to a large extent, and the construction workers strike of April, 1966 was notable for the relative absence of intimidation and violence. This degree of stability had been achieved through a long tradition of maintaining a "common front" (front syndical) between the two central bodies, or building trades councils, of CLC and CNTU unions. These acted together in assuring common agreements with employer bodies, on behalf of their affiliated trade unions, so as to avoid damaging divisions and conflicts.

The "common front" almost broke down in the course of negotiations and the strike that developed in 1966. A tentative agreement had been reached by the "common front" providing for wage increases ranging from \$1.05 an hour for unskilled labour to \$1.20 an hour for skilled tradesmen spread over three years. These, according to one prominent employer spokesman, were "the largest and most rapid wage and fringe benefit increases ever negotiated in Canada, for the categories of construction workers concerned." 79/

At a mass meeting of 7,500 construction union members on April 12, however, the proposed agreement was rejected by a narrow majority vote. One union official blamed it on a small group of "about 100 irresponsible youths." According to local newspaper accounts, when J.-P. Ménard, President of the local CLC building trades council, spoke to the meeting and

recommended acceptance of the employers' offer, he was greeted with boos and cries of "on strike." The amplifier system broke down during his speech, due to damage by a dissident minority according to some accounts. Then Marcel Pépin, President of the local Building Trades Federation of the CNTU, suggested further negotiations with the employers. This suggestion was rejected by Ménard.

The strike that developed next day involved an estimated 10,000 workers directly, most of whom were members of CNTU unions. Most of the 25,000 members of CLC building trades unions, however, for the first few days refused to go through CNTU picket lines. The strike consequently was successful in stopping all major construction projects in metropolitan Montreal, with the exception of Expo 67 (which operated under a separate no-strike agreement). CLC building trades union officials advised their members to resume work and avoid strike action. Employers meanwhile refused to meet with CNTU representatives and attempted to maintain operations. The CNTU sent out "flying squads" of pickets to close down construction activity. Several arrests were made in various parts of the city for alleged intimidation. There was, however, very little property damage or violence and what few instances did occur were not premeditated. 80/

The strike ended within five days when the employers offered some additional minor concessions, which were accepted by a voting majority at a new membership meeting. 81/

Longshoremen, St. Lawrence—April-June, 1966

Considerable labour unrest on the Montreal waterfront was indicated by a series of wildcat strikes over various issues during the early and

middle 1960's. One that developed during April and May of 1966 lasted more than a month and generated a crisis that finally forced Parliament to intervene.

The strike began over an apparently minor issue. In view of the wage demands involved, however, it seems likely that longshoremen, like numerous organized labour groups in other industries and trades in the Montreal area, were strongly influenced by the unprecedented gains in wages and fringe benefits that were accruing to workers in the building and construction industry. Numerous similarities in skills and conditions of employment tend to place the two in the same "orbit of coercive comparison."

A wildcat strike of some 3,500 longshoremen on the Montreal waterfront broke out on April 19 in protest against the ticketing of longshoremen's cars parked in the area. It ended two days later when apparently appropriate arrangements were made by the National Harbours Board and the Shipping Federation to handle the problem. 82/

Another wildcat strike, again apparently over the parking issue, developed about three weeks later, on May 9. On this occasion longshoremen in Quebec City and Three Rivers joined those in Montreal in a walkout that effectively paralyzed shipping in the lower St. Lawrence waterway. It lasted for 39 days.

It soon became evident that parking difficulties were not the central issue in this dispute. It arose, rather, out of dissatisfaction of the men with the progress that was being made in negotiations for a new agreement of their union with the Shipping Federation. The old agreement had expired on December 31st. Representatives of the striking longshoremen

in the three ports affected announced that they would not return to work unless assured that any arbitrator appointed to settle their dispute with the Shipping Federation "has the strength to step up contract negotiations." 83/

Judge Claude Prevost of the Quebec Superior Court was appointed head of a conciliation board to deal with the dispute. He had to dissolve proceedings, however, after Shipping Federation representatives refused to participate, on the grounds that to do so while the men were on a wildcat strike would be to condone illegal action. Judge Prevost ruled against this contention. 84/ The longshoremen, in turn, voted to request the federal Minister of Labour, the Honourable Jack Nicholson, to intervene in the dispute on the grounds that the Shipping Federation was "sabotaging" attempts at conciliation. 85/

The union was reported demanding a \$1.00 per hour increase over two years, above the prevailing wage of \$2.53 an hour, in the new agreement. The employers offered a 57 cent an hour increase over three years while demanding a cut in the size of working teams from 19 to 16 men as an economy measure. 86/

Judge René Lippé of the Montreal District Court was appointed a mediator on May 17 in a new attempt to end the strike. His efforts failed for the time being when a week later the union membership voted to reject pay increases proposed in a one-year agreement. On May 28 the Honourable Mr. Nicholson called a special meeting of union and employer representatives to break the deadlock but likewise failed. He subsequently reported to Parliament that "despite an offer of fantastic pay increases" negotiations in the three-week old strike remained stalled on the issue of work-crew

sizes. The Shipping Federation's demand for smaller work crews aroused widespread fear of displacement and unemployment. 87/

The strike took a violent turn early in June as efforts were made to carry on operations with non-union crews. Tires were slashed and windows broken in numerous cars and company property was reported damaged by explosions. Five hundred police were dispatched to patrol the waterfront in the wake of these outbreaks.

The crisis being generated by the strike, particularly the threat it posed for Expo 67, and the violence that was developing, created mounting pressure on Parliament to intervene. As mediator Judge Lippé, to settle the issue concerning work crew sizes, proposed that the federal government set up a special inquiry commission on waterfront labour problems, together with the promise to find alternative jobs for or pay unemployment compensation to any St. Lawrence longshoremen displaced by a reduction in size of crews. The federal government, through the Minister of Labour, publicly endorsed this proposal and coupled it with the announcement that the Cabinet was prepared to ask Parliament for emergency powers to force a settlement of the strike which, by now, had lasted four weeks. As in the settlement of the railway strike in 1950, the government would ask for special legislation empowering it to order the longshoremen back to work and to impose compulsory and binding arbitration on the union and the Shipping Federation. On June 13 it was announced that the legislation had been prepared for submission to Parliament.

In an unprecedented move, Prime Minister Pearson and five members of his Cabinet intervened to assure settlement of the dispute. These included the Ministers of Labour, Transport, Health, and Finance as well as the

President of the Privy Council. 88/ Under the weight of this pressure the strike was settled two days later, on June 15, after lasting 39 days. 89/

The wage increases granted in the new agreement were unusually generous. The men received a 40 cent an hour increase retroactive to January 1, 1966, and further increases of 22 cents on January 1, 1967 and 25 cents on May 1, 1967. Subsequently, strikes developed among longshoremen in Toronto, Hamilton and Sarnia. They were awarded increases comparable to those in the St. Lawrence ports.

Railways Across Canada--August-September 1966

Hardly was a settlement in sight for the longshoremen when a new crisis faced shipping on the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes waterway. This arose from the demands by seaway workers, who were organized by the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers (CBRT) for substantial wage increases. They were stimulated in large part by the unusually large wage increases offered to, and won, by the longshoremen. It was announced, on June 7, 1966 that the St. Lawrence Seaway workers had voted overwhelmingly for strike action to support their demands. 90/

A new strike at this point would have been doubly damaging after the longshoremen's strike had already rendered an estimated 150 ships idle for up to a month. The new dispute was quickly settled when a federally appointed conciliation board recommended an unprecedented wage increase of 30% spread over two years, plus substantial fringe benefits, an offer which the men enthusiastically accepted.

This development in turn generated yet another major crisis. Unrest and dissatisfaction had been reported widespread among railway workers and

there had been some wildcat strikes of sizeable proportions over the past two years. One of particular importance had occurred over the issue of technological change and displacement. It led to the appointment of a special Royal Commission of Inquiry under Mr. Justice Samuel Freedman of the Supreme Court of Manitoba. In his report he made the controversial recommendation that employers should be required to negotiate on changes made during the life of a union agreement when they affect working conditions.

Negotiations for a new agreement between the CPR, the CNR and 17 non-running trades had been going on for several months by mid-1966. The precedent established by the Seaway settlement set a new and higher wage target for railway workers and their union representatives. Membership militancy and union pressure increased during the summer as workers in other industries were involved in highly publicized strikes for unusually large wage increases. The two involving Inco and Stelco, as described earlier, were outstanding cases in point. Labour unrest and industrial conflict thus mounted to a climax of sorts with the second nation-wide railway strike in Canada's history during late August and early September 1966.

Almost simultaneously with the announcement of the end of the St. Lawrence Longshoremen's strike and of the Seaway workers dispute, the 22,000 members of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers employed by the CNR voted overwhelmingly in favour of a strike to enforce wage increases demanded in a new agreement. 21/ More than a month later, in late July, after intensive conciliation and mediation efforts by the federal government, it was reported that a joint deadline for a nation-wide railway strike was being discussed among four railway union groups.

Earlier two groups of non-operating unions had rejected a federal conciliation board report that had recommended wage increases of 30 cents to 43 cents an hour spread over two years. 92/

Union pressure increased steadily, and rapidly, as a number of wildcat strikes developed among railway workers. An unauthorized walkout by 2,200 railway expressmen in Montreal and another 1,500 in Toronto forced the CPR and CNR to impose selective embargoes on express and small goods shipments. The strike began among members of the CBRT employed by the CNR, who walked off their jobs in protest against delays in contract negotiations with the railways. 93/ It was interpreted by one observer as a "symptom of general restlessness among CBRT members in particular and railway workers in general. 94/ During the next two weeks the number of wildcat strikers increased, and in Windsor, Ontario, it was reported that members of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen (BRT) were prepared to join the walkout. Earlier the BRT had conducted a membership vote in which the majority rejected a federal conciliation board's recommendations for settling the union's dispute with the two major companies. 95/

Meanwhile, leaders of the 17 railway unions involved in contract negotiations with the railway companies held meetings to set a common official date for a cross-Canada strike that would involve an estimated 110,000 workers. They appealed to those of their members who had "jumped the gun" to return to work until the deadline for an official strike could be agreed upon. 96/ Finally, on August 26, 1966, the nation-wide strike began.

The strike, in very broad outline, followed much the same course as in the earlier one in 1950. It was settled by essentially the same

means and with much the same sort of result. Unions, management, government and the public generally, however, having already experienced one Canada-wide railway strike as a totally new event, reacted somewhat differently the second time around. There was little of the vitriolic exchange of views in a "battle of press releases" between union and management spokesmen such as had featured the previous dispute. Nor were there expressed such ominous forebodings and almost hysterical predictions as before. It was generally recognized that Parliament would be called into emergency session to pass special legislation to end the strike, as had been done before. Indeed, the special bill for this purpose had already been prepared for submission to Parliament before the strike actually took place. In that sense, at least, the government and the general public were better prepared than they had been on the earlier occasion 16 years before.

On the other hand, the railway workers in this second strike were generally in a more militant and rebellious mood, as was evident from the wildcat strikes that had preceded the general walkout, so that there was no real assurance that they would comply with the terms of the emergency statute that was to be submitted to Parliament. Indeed a local official of the CBRT predicted that there would be "civil disobedience" if the federal government legislated an end to the strike in the form of an ultimatum to return to work. The union policy announced beforehand was that any settlement proposed, or imposed, by legislation would be referred to the locals for a decision to accept or reject. The union leadership's recommendations to the locals would be made only after a careful study of such legislation. 27/

As it turned out, the government badly mishandled the whole issue in Parliament so that the emergency bill to end the strike was passed only after four days of wrangling among the major political parties. And compliance of the strikers to the terms of the new statute did indeed prove difficult to achieve.

The bill was submitted to an emergency session of Parliament on August 29, three days after the strike began. In the form originally submitted it ordered an immediate end to the strike, and provided for a two-stage wage increase of 8 per cent, with further increases to be negotiated by conciliation and ultimately, if need be, by binding arbitration. No penalties were provided in the bill in case the strikers should defy the back-to-work orders. This contingency was presumed to be already covered by a blanket provision in the Criminal Code which specified imprisonment for two years for anyone disobeying an Act of Parliament. The government also put before the Commons a railway reform bill which provided for the establishment of a commission of 17 members to regulate all forms of transportation. The Prime Minister, speaking in support of these two measures, explained that the first bill was designed to send the strikers back to work and get bargaining resumed, while the second one would provide the railways with prospects of better earnings with which to meet the higher wage and other claims of the employees. 98/

The reaction of leading railway union officials to the emergency bill, as first introduced, was immediate and hostile. It was denounced by union leaders across the country and was subjected to strong criticism by opposition members in the House of Commons. A delegation of union officials met with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Labour and indicated in no

uncertain terms that the wage package offered would have to include a guaranteed pay increase of at least 18 per cent. They made it clear that there was no way in which they could induce their members to go back to work for the 8 per cent increase specified in the bill. 99/

Subsequently, on September 1, after four days of debate, a revised bill was passed which guaranteed a minimum four-stage wage increase of 18 per cent during 1966 and 1967. Union leaders ordered their members back to work while indicating to the government that there was nothing they could do if the men refused. 100/

It took several days for railway operations to return to normal as various dissident groups of railway employees across the country refused Parliament's ultimatum to return to work. One main centre of opposition was Toronto, where railway workers on September 5 were reported remaining on strike and maintaining their picket lines. A leading union spokesman in Montreal expressed a fear of trouble, "perhaps even bloodshed", if returning workers tried to cross the picket lines of strikers still holding out. 101/

By September 6 complete railway service was reported restored in most of eastern Canada and the Prairie provinces, as workers in key areas voted to obey Parliament's order to end the strike. Neither major railway was able to operate regularly in British Columbia, however, as several hundred employees remained on strike. However, next day, on September 7, more than four days after the bill had been passed in Parliament, it was reported that the last holdouts in British Columbia had returned to their jobs with the assurance that they would not be punished for disobeying a parliamentary edict. 102/

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CHAPTER IX

LABOUR UNREST AND CONFLICT IN RETROSPECT

The rising wave of labour unrest and conflict over the past decade, culminating in the nation-wide railway strike in 1966, was comparable in scope, and to a lesser extent in illegality and violence, to the earlier waves that reached their peaks in 1919-20 and in 1946-47. One is tempted, again, to wonder whether history does tend to repeat itself. Are there built-in characteristics or maladjustments in the Canadian economic and social structure and in its industrial relations system that, every 20 years or so, generate recurrent waves of unrest and revolt throughout the nation? Or was this most recent wave so different from its predecessors in cause and effect, in the paths it followed and the general environment in which it took place, as to constitute an entirely new phenomenon?

Broad Economic Factors

There are innumerable similarities and differences one could point to in attempting to compare industrial conflict in these three widely separate eras. The most obvious point of difference, of course, is that the two preceding peaks of labour unrest and strikes occurred immediately following Canada's involvement in two world wars. The strike wave of the

1960's, by contrast, occurred long after Canada had been directly involved in any major military venture.

Another difference in the nature and timing of the most recent wave of strikes as compared to those in previous decades, as noted earlier, is that it followed a distinct cyclical pattern, in close tandem with the underlying cycle of economic expansion and inflation of the early and middle 1960's. How is one to account for this coincidence?

A simple college textbook explanation based on assumptions of rational economic behaviour would make the answer seem easy and obvious at first glance. Industrial conflict, as measured by strikes and lockouts, tends to decline during periods of recession and unemployment, and to rise in number, size and duration during boom periods, for a number of related and obvious reasons. Rising money earnings tend to be cancelled out by price increases during periods of economic expansion and inflation, so that workers and union members have a strong incentive to seek, and if necessary strike for, unusually large wage gains to keep ahead of the rising cost of living. Highly publicized profits of leading corporations; spectacular "killings" on the real estate and stock markets; conspicuous expenditures by the nouveaux riches; the general awareness of rising earnings and living standards of neighbors and colleagues in various occupations—all these generate escalating demands, among wage-earners and union members, and by them on their union leaders and bargaining representatives, for new wage increases or equivalent dollar benefits. Their willingness and ability to strike for such demands likewise increase as expanding employment provides alternative job opportunities in case of strikes and reduces the availability of potential strike-breakers that employers might otherwise be able to

recruit. Employers, correspondingly, are generally willing to make large concessions in wages or other benefits during periods of rapid economic expansion and inflation, because strikes are most costly in the face of unfilled orders at profitable prices and more difficult to defeat in periods of full employment. Strikes tend to be concentrated at or near the peak of a boom, therefore, when the momentum of built-in or accumulated expectations of wage increases by workers, based on the recent high profits of employers, run head-on into the greater caution of the latter regarding expectations of reduced sales, lower prices and/or "cost-push squeezes" that threaten to reduce their profits in the near future. Such expectations motivate employers to resist demands for further wage increases from their employees and union representatives.

Conflict emanating from such developments tend to be sharpened when government officials at or near the peak of a boom begin to be concerned about the dangers of runaway inflation, and take steps to counteract them by such measures as credit restrictions and "tight money", tax increases and cutbacks in government expenditures. A "now-or-never" psychology thus tends to develop, particularly in union ranks, while caution and willingness to resist further union demands are stiffened among employers.

The above provides, in crude form a logical explanation of sorts. If it is a realistic explanation, however, then it suggests that organized labour has become much more mobilized, rational (in the purely economic sense) and sensitive to the vagaries of the national economy than in previous decades. If so, the strike "wave" of 1965-66 diverged rather sharply

from comparable "waves" of previous decades. Yet, as the preceding chapter brings out, there was much that was "irrational—again, in the purely economic sense—in the industrial relations "crisis" of the mid-1960's.

As the history of industrial conflict in the preceding chapters brings out, the previous "waves" and "peaks" in strikes occurred under circumstances that were, on the face of it, very different from those of 1965-66. The two previous periods that were at all comparable in the breadth, intensity and general "incidence" of strikes were, as noted before, those of 1919-20 and of 1946-47. These were generally attributed to the special circumstances of wartime restrictions and frustrations and the general "blow-up" that followed the end of wartime hostilities. But the circumstances in these two earlier cases also appeared to be very different. In the first period, of 1919-20, serious wartime inflation, combined with a general wage-price lag and widespread employer opposition to unions, reached a peak in the immediate postwar period. This special combination of circumstances explained much of the breadth, intensity and violence of conflict at that time. The second period of 1946-47, by contrast, due to the more effective regulations and controls that were in effect during and immediately after World War II, was not characterized by overly serious inflation. The peak of inflationary postwar expansion, "full" employment and labour shortages was not reached until late 1948 and early 1949, and this was the period when industrial conflict in aggregate terms fell to its lowest point in the more than two decades since World War II. There were later peaks of inflation and economic growth, during 1951, following the outbreak of the Korean war and again during the investment boom of 1956 and early 1957, but in neither of these was there a "wave" of strikes at all comparable to 1965-66 or 1946-47.

Clearly therefore, there does not seem to have been any clear and consistent correlation, in Canada, of major peak periods of industrial conflict, as measured by the general incidence of strikes over the nation as a whole, with peak periods of economic growth, full employment, and inflation. This generalization appears to be in agreement with the findings in John Vanderkamp's study. 1/ Two minor nation-wide strike peaks, those of 1937 and 1943, did appear to have some correlation with the expansionary phase of business cycles it is true. But, as described in earlier chapters, these appear to have arisen primarily as a result of the dramatic revival of trade union organization beginning in the United States during the mid-1930's under the auspices of the CIO and later extending into Canada, coupled with the widespread, stubborn and at times violent resistance of employers. The issue of union recognition was a major one in both of these "waves" and was generally lacking in 1946-47 and 1965-66. The overall incidence of strikes was far less and the pattern of conflict was noticeably different in the latter 1930's and early 1940's from the postwar II period.

Rather than seeking any sort of general theory that attempts to link the ebb-and-flow of industrial conflict with the ups and downs of the so-called "business cycle", therefore, it would seem more fruitful to narrow the analysis down to more specific questions such as:

- Under what special circumstances do strikes tend to rise to a peak that coincides, more or less, with a peak period of economic expansion and/or inflation?
- What, specifically, were the special features of the expansionary phase of the 1960's, "peaking" in 1966, that accounted for the

high degree of correlation in this decade, in contrast to previous decades?

- What, if any, features did the period 1965-66 have in common with 1946-47, two periods so different in terms of the usual indices of economic growth and stages of the business cycle?

As the brief analysis below brings out, there were and are several features, demographic, political and socio-psychological as well as economic in nature, of the situation in the 1960's that present sharp contrasts to that of the 1940's and 1950's. If we confine ourselves at this point to the more-or-less "purely" economic and industrial relations aspects, however, there are several which appear to be broadly similar.

The strike waves of 1937, 1943 and 1946-47 have been explained in earlier chapters as the result of periods of rapid growth in size and bargaining power of the trade union movement during the recovery of the latter 1930's and the war-induced prosperity of the 1940's. These occurred after unions and their members had undergone a long period of decline and losses in wages and in standards of working conditions during the depression of the early 1930's, followed by the excessive regulations and restraints of wartime. When the main reasons for—and purposes of—these restraints were removed at the end of the war, in 1945, the "lid blew off".

Perhaps there is a roughly similar parallel in the broad cycle of the latter 1940's, the 1950's and the early 1960's. During the latter 1940's and early 1950's the trade union movement in Canada, as described earlier, experienced unusually rapid gains in size of membership and bargaining power, and in wage gains, fringe benefits, and improvements in working conditions. These coincided with, and were made possible by, a

combination of circumstances favouring an unusually rapid rate of growth in the Canadian economy generally-- in population, in export trade and investment, and in per capita output and income, up to late 1957.

This was followed, as described earlier, by a pronounced change in the economic and industrial relations "climate". From 1957 until the early 1960's Canada's rate of growth, particularly as measured by unemployment, output and real income per capita, fell considerably below those of most comparable western nations. Wage rates likewise lagged behind these others, despite a higher incidence of strikes in this country than in most other western nations. "Technological unemployment", through displacement from "automation", became a major source of worry and preoccupation in union circles. Employers in a number of industries, faced with high costs and lagging sales, and enjoying greater bargaining power due to higher rates of unemployment, changed from a perhaps overly-permissive policy of "softness" during the prosperous late 1940's and early 1950's to one of excessive "toughness" later in the decade. Governments likewise passed new legislation, or adopted new administrative policies that imposed more severe restrictions on unions. Unions, in the face of these and other developments, experienced a declining percentage of membership in the paid labour force and won limited gains in wages and "fringe" benefits.

In brief, it might be hypothesized that the trade union movement in Canada, after experiencing dramatic gains in membership, bargaining power, status and tangible economic gains for a decade or more after the war, comparable to the gains similarly enjoyed from the mid-1930's into the early years of World War II, then faced, during the latter 1950's and early 1960's, a combination of adverse circumstances, or more specifically,

restraints on wage increases, comparable to those imposed during World War II. These restraints were imposed, indirectly, from such factors as unemployment, "automation", the "new toughness" of management, and new and more restrictive legislation. The frustration felt by wide sections of the trade union movement and union members arising from these special conditions of the latter 1950's and early 1960's may have been broadly comparable to those experienced earlier, during World War II. They contributed therefore to a similar pattern and comparable intensity of "blowing the lid off" when conditions again were deemed favourable, i.e., conditions of "full" employment and impending inflation in anticipation of a downturn to follow. (The anticipated downturn did not, in fact, occur until several years after the war and another one will not necessarily occur in the immediate future).

In other words, conditions of full employment and inflation do not, in themselves, necessarily generate widespread industrial unrest. The experience of most countries in western Europe over the past 15 to 20 years would seem to verify this generalization. The essential determinant would seem to be whether inflation, economic growth and full employment are maintained as a fairly continuous and stable trend—as they have been in most of western Europe as well as Japan—in contrast to the unstable pattern of bursts of inflationary expansion followed by periods of recession and serious unemployment which have been characteristic of the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Belgium. These countries have also experienced a generally higher incidence of industrial conflict than have West Germany, Sweden, Holland, France, Italy and Japan, for instance, over the past 10 to 15 years. There are various social and political factors also involved in these differences of course, as there have been in Canada itself, in comparing the extent and intensity of industrial conflict during the mid-1960's with the latter 1940's and 1950's.

There is perhaps a more specific explanation for the particular cyclical pattern of industrial conflict in Canada during the 1960's. During the 1950's, as described earlier, British Columbia experienced two such pronounced cycles. In both cases, it has been argued, the centre of conflict was in the construction industry, arising out of large, concentrated investment projects, mostly in remote and hitherto underdeveloped areas of the province's economy. These gave rise to unusually large wage increases and other gains which had subsequent repercussions in a sort of "chain reaction" in other industries and occupations throughout the province. Because of British Columbia's relatively small population and remoteness from Canada's main centres of population, industry and trade, however, these conflicts had few repercussions on the rest of the country.

During the mid-1960's, on the other hand, a similar but much larger cycle was generated in one of Canada's major metropolitan centres, namely Montreal, and the repercussions this time were nation-wide. If one were to over-simplify the whole picture in order to pin-point the issue, it might not be too unrealistic to suggest that Expo 67 was the major project that "triggered" the whole series; and, as in British Columbia, the construction industry was the main "carrier" or "pattern-setter". With the hundreds of millions of dollars invested directly in Expo itself, while other hundreds of millions were being poured into public and private construction in the greater Montreal area, that city was the centre of the largest single group of construction projects carried out in one labour market area in Canada's entire history. The concentrated demand for construction workers in many different trades, and the labour shortages that developed in various branches, raised average hourly earnings of construction workers generally in the Montreal area at an unprecedented rate to the highest levels in Canada.

These developments had, as would be expected, strong repercussions upon other industries and trades. The long, bitter, and occasionally violent strike of longshoremen in Montreal and other ports in Quebec, as suggested earlier, was probably one by-product. Longshoring, as an occupation characterized by pronounced, seasonal and cyclical fluctuations in demand and intermittent unemployment is a field whose workers consider construction to be within their "orbit of coercive comparison", to use Ross's well-known phrase. In view of Canada's export commitments, as well as the timetable set for the opening of Expo 67, the longshoremen's strike in the spring of 1966 was creating a crisis of major proportions. The federal Cabinet was prepared to ask Parliament for special legislation to end the strike and to impose arbitration of the unresolved issues if an agreement had not been reached.

Settlement of this strike, on the basis of unusually high wage concessions, did not end the crisis that was being generated in the key field of transportation. The seaway workers then submitted demands comparable to those won by the longshoremen and a strike was narrowly averted when a federal conciliation board unanimously recommended a wage increase amounting to some 30 per cent spread over two years. This set the stage, in turn, for similarly large demands by unions in the two major railway systems and in August 1966, as in 1950, Canada for the second time in her history was faced with a general nation-wide strike of railway workers. Again, as in 1950, it was ended only through Parliament passing special legislation which, in effect, imposed compulsory arbitration.

The so-called "Pearson formula"—i.e., the series of federal government-sanctioned settlements on unusually generous terms in these highly

publicized disputes—has been widely blamed in news media and other sources for adding fuel to the flames of industrial conflict and contributing to inflationary wage measures in other industries during 1966. It allegedly encouraged a wide variety of groups to adopt extravagant bargaining demands and to go on strike in the hope of similarly benefitting from benevolent government intervention. It may have been an important factor in helping explain the unusually high incidence of strikes among public employees of various kinds at all levels—federal, provincial and municipal.

This, however, would seem to be an oversimplified and in a sense unfair analysis of a complex situation. The basis for an unusually high incidence of disputes in "key" industries, and the unavailability of unusually large wage settlements during 1966-67, had already been laid during 1965 and earlier by the unprecedented construction boom and its "multiplier effects" throughout the economy. The unusually high incidence of large and protracted strikes in the province of Quebec, and again, particularly among public and professional employees, was probably to be explained mainly by the fact that the 1965-67 boom was most intense in Greater Montreal and its environs.

This was not the only reason of course. Another important development that had occurred was a major change in labour legislation in that province as part of the "quiet revolution". Under the Duplessis regime, strikes of public employees had been prohibited. This restriction was later removed when the Liberals came to power under Premier Lesage.

Also, it is to be noted, a number of major disputes ending in unusually generous wage settlements had already occurred in Quebec and Ontario in 1966, notably among aircraft workers and liquor board employees

in the former and among automobile and construction workers in the latter. These and other developments helped generate unrest among railway workers, letter-carriers and postal employees, among other groups, and this unrest appears to have been concentrated among larger locals in Montreal and other main metropolitan centres. Rising unrest from these and other causes finally culminated in nation-wide strikes in 1965 and 1966 among postal workers and railway employees respectively.

To sum up the main economic causes of the strike wave of 1965-66: rapid economic growth, "full" employment, inflation and rising prices cannot, by themselves, be considered the underlying economic causes of the intense conflict of the mid-1960's. Such developments have been much more characteristic of, and have been going on much longer in a number of countries in western Europe, without generating widespread industrial conflict. And they have occurred in a number of previous "booms" in Canada without widespread conflict. What perhaps was different in the 1960's was the highly concentrated and unstable pattern of expansion. The Economic Council of Canada in its Fourth Annual Report was particularly critical of the lack of planning of capital investment in Canada by governments at both the federal and provincial levels as well as by the private industry sector generally. This resulted, through a "multiplier effect", in a general pattern of economic instability which was particularly marked in the construction industry. The Economic Council might well have added that this pattern of general economic instability helped generate, as one of its by-products, instability in labour relations over a wide list of industries and occupations, thus contributing to the mounting wave of conflict during the 1960's.

This still begs the question of course. To maintain that an unstable pattern of economic growth is a major contributing factor to labour unrest and strikes would seem to indicate that a business cycle theory of industrial conflict does have some validity after all, despite the absence of any reliable statistical correlation in Canada in previous decades. Canada's economic growth has followed a markedly unstable pattern for many years, yet only in the 1960's did the two cycles of economic growth and industrial conflict operate in close tandem.

This raises a new question, or an old question in a new form. Did the combination of events that applied during 1961-66 represent a unique situation in generating a cyclical pattern of conflict? Or is the Canadian economy, and its industrial relations system, now facing a new and continuing situation in which labour unrest and strikes may be expected in the future to respond closely to cycles of growth and stagnation in gross national product, employment and other major indices of economic activity? If the answer to this second question is in the affirmative, then what conditions, apparently absent in previous decades, account for this new sensitivity?

The answer would seem to lie in a number of broad structural, legal and other changes that have occurred in recent years. Many large and protracted strikes of earlier decades arose out of such phenomena as wage-cuts and discriminatory layoffs or discharges imposed unilaterally by employers during depression periods; refusal of employers to recognize and negotiate with unions, accompanied sometimes by deliberate "union-busting" campaigns; and new and vigorous organizational campaigns by unions, leading to a rapid growth of membership. Strikes arising out of such phenomena had

little direct relation to the ups and downs of the economy so they did not tend to be concentrated at or near the peak of business cycles.

Such issues have largely ceased to be a cause of major strikes since World War II, due in large part to changes in legislation and in employer policy. Strikes in recent decades, therefore, in the overwhelming majority of cases have occurred in already unionized industries, over the negotiation of new agreements or over disputes about the interpretation and application of agreements already in force. Issues arising from these would be expected to be more immediately responsive to cyclical changes in the economy and to generate most pressure and conflict during periods of rapid expansion.

Large new organizational campaigns by unions, and rapid increases in union membership, furthermore, have not occurred over the past decade. Unions have tended, rather, to consolidate or improve their position in the already well-organized sectors of the economy, and to focus their energies on achieving economic gains for their existing memberships. This policy, again, would tend to encourage closer response than before to changes in the larger economic environment, particularly in boom periods. The only significant new breakthrough in union growth over the past decade has been among white-collar and professional workers, particularly in the field of public service. Because of newness and weakness of organization, limitations in bargaining power and other constraints, the bargaining demands and strike activities of such groups tend to follow the lead of the stronger and more established organizations. In doing so, of course, they contribute to the concentration of strikes during boom periods. This was notably the case during the mid-sixties.

Finally, changes in structure and personnel among various trade unions, together with improvements in transportation and communication, have perhaps encouraged a greater sensitivity and responsiveness to various broad developments in the economic environment. This may also be due partly to large and important shifts in the age structure of the labour force. As described in earlier chapters, there were numerous lags in the response of various unionized workers to the maladjustments arising out of World War II. Railway and construction workers, most notably, did not participate on any large scale in the postwar strike wave of 1946-47. As explained earlier, this was probably due, in the case of construction workers, to organizational weaknesses in the building trades unions and to the conservatism of a predominantly older group of union leaders. Much the same was true of most of the railway unions, together with the special restraints and inhibitions against strike action, particularly on a nation-wide scale, among workers employed in a major public utility. Thus it was not until the early 1950's that railway and construction workers engaged in large, industry-wide or market-wide shutdowns in seeking to win wage and other benefit gains comparable to those achieved during the strikes of 1946-47, largely by unions in primary and heavy manufacturing goods industries. In recent years, by contrast, unions in railways and construction have acted much more in concert with those in other industries. Construction workers in particular have tended to be the main "pattern-setters" in major urban industrial centres and other unions have acted more quickly in response to such patterns.

SPECIFIC ISSUES

The wave of labour unrest and strikes during 1965-66 was notable not only for the wide scope and proportionately large number of union members, and employees generally, who were involved. It was also characterized, as noted earlier, by an unusually high incidence of wildcat strikes and membership repudiation of union leaders, mob action, physical violence, property damage and other illegal activities, which in turn led to intervention of police forces and large numbers of arrests and convictions. In these respects, again, industrial relations in Canada appeared to be reverting to a pattern more characteristic of the era preceding World War II. ✓

A wide variety of forces operating on the Canadian or North American scene could be pointed to in attempting to explain these phenomena. Besides the general economic changes in the larger environment discussed above, there have been a number of more specific industrial relations issues, in the United States and Canada alike, that have tended to generate widespread unrest in the industrial scene. The breadth and intensity of the conflict arising from such issues, however, seem understandable only in the context of various broad socio-psychological trends or forces described later.

(a) The lagging rate of growth in the Canadian and American economies during 1958 to 1961, coupled with rapid technological change, generated widespread layoffs, unemployment and feelings of insecurity—particularly, perhaps, among younger workers lacking seniority. These in turn, perhaps carried over into the 1960's into "now or never" attitudes or sentiments for "getting it now while the getting is good" under conditions of "full" employment and rapid growth. ✓

(b) Feelings of insecurity and unrest have been further aggravated, a number of writers stress, by the widespread practice, in managerial circles, of unilaterally introducing technological changes without prior notification to or consultation with workers and their unions. The issue was widely publicized in the Report by an Inquiry Commission headed by Mr. Justice Freedman to investigate a dispute between the CNR and the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway and Transport Workers—a dispute that developed into a wildcat strike. The Report stated, in part:

The Commission is of the view that the wildcat strike was fundamentally an act of protest ...(against the company and partly against the union)... for having failed to secure protection against the unilateral changes in working conditions made during the existence of the contract... But the protest of the men had a more fundamental cause. It derived in large measure from a sense of insecurity in the face of a changing technological world...their reaction was one of anxiety...coupled with that was a feeling of powerlessness deriving in large measure from the knowledge that change could be introduced at the will of management and the men were helpless to do anything about it.... The sense of frustration more than anything else led the men to risk their jobs and their pensions in the illegal adventure in which they embarked. 2/

(c) Compounding the problem, as Crispo and Arthurs, Greenspan and other writers point out, has been the rigidity of collective bargaining in the face of rapidly changing technologies and working conditions, and the consequent helplessness of unions in many cases to protect their members. Agreements, under Canadian law, apply for fixed periods of a year or more and attempt to cover all conceivable wage rates, job specifications and other contingencies that workers face. But while agreements are in force, employers frequently introduce changes, new jobs and new conditions of work that could not be foreseen when agreements were negotiated and that do not, therefore, legally constitute grievances that can be settled by arbitration.

This situation has arisen frequently in steel, meat packing and other industries besides railways.

(d) Further compounding the difficulties are the rapidly growing size and scale of operations in industry and, consequently, the increasing complexity of union and management organizations, and a growing tendency for the settlement of issues to get "bogged down" in bureaucracy and red tape. Nowhere has this been more apparent than in railways, with their complex transcontinental network of facilities on the one hand, and the multiplicity of unions on the other. As described by Ed Finn, Editor of Canadian Transport (journal of the CBRT):

The size and complexity of the railway industry has compelled the unions to adapt their own structure and operations to conform with those of the companies.... Understandably, then, the rail unions have developed much more elaborate internal structures than have unions in other industries. Their members consequently find themselves entangled in two red-tapedoms, that of their unions and that of their employers. Filing a complaint and getting it piloted through the labyrinthine channels of the union and company administrations is often an arduous and time-consuming procedure. It is not uncommon for a grievance to take a whole year to process to a final decision. Some grievances, which have gone to the ultimate stage of arbitration, have dragged on for two years, or even longer. Many workers become so disillusioned with the delays in processing grievances that they no longer take the trouble to file them. The result is that discontent accumulates until it reaches the point where it explodes in the form of a wildcat strike. z/

Again, while the railways represent the extreme in this regard, such conditions are not uncommon in a number of other industries characterized by large-scale operations.

(e) While grievance procedures and arbitrations of disputes are thus tending to be less effective in settling unrest and conflict in various

industries, and thus tending to increase the size and frequency of wildcat strikes, provincial legislation in recent years has generally been placing more restrictions on workers' freedom to engage in such strikes, and imposing more severe penalties for illegal strikes and picketing. This has been the case particularly in Ontario and British Columbia. Feelings of injustice thus may in many cases become compounded, and encourage attitudes of contempt for, and defiance of, the law.

(f) Furthermore, as numerous critics allege, the structures and internal governments of many unions in Canada are rigid and ill-adapted to the changing industrial environment. For one thing, comprising as they do thousands of subsidiary branches of international unions designed for the much larger United States economy, unions in Canada in many cases are too many and too small to bargain effectively with employers or to service their members adequately. The resulting frustration and dissatisfaction further contribute to unrest and revolt on a wide scale.

(g) Again, the slow growth of unionism in Canada during the latter 1950's and early 1960's, representing as it did a shrinking proportion of total paid workers, meant that there were insufficient new positions of leadership for the increasing numbers of young, ambitious workers entering the labour force and union ranks. These latter have tended to become an opposition group of "Young Turks" in many unions. The incumbent older leaders have tended to hang on to their posts in the face of threats of growing competition and opposition. The frustration generated by this situation perhaps tends to be all the greater in many cases in Canada, because in many unions the incumbents in the most important positions of leadership are appointed by International Executives, or elected by the International conventions as a whole, so cannot be dislodged or voted out of office by dissident or rebellious Canadian memberships.

That this situation has been generating widespread unrest seems indicated, not only by wildcat strikes and the rejection of agreements negotiated by union leaders but also, as noted, by the numerous "breakaways" of Canadian locals from their United States parent bodies and, in Quebec, by the switch of affiliation of numerous unions from the CLC to the predominantly French-speaking CNTU.

CANADA'S INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS "SYSTEM"

A recurring theme throughout this whole period of 1960-66, as well as in earlier decades, has been the apparent inability of the Canadian industrial relations "system" (if such it can be called) to adjust easily to major changes in the economic and social structure and to deal effectively with issues and maladjustments generating widespread unrest. It thus recurrently builds up to an explosive point, leading to waves of strikes, usually accompanied by illegality and legal suppression. The prevailing system of laws periodically finds itself unable to contain or control new forces of change and widespread flouting of the law results.

In the face of each new "crisis" new and more or less drastic changes are undertaken in labour legislation, union and employer policies and the like. These lead to a new period of stability, followed by a gradually rising new wave of unrest that again reaches a climax in a new wave of strikes. And so on.

In previous decades, the main issue underlying the most intense conflict was a basic inequity in the laws and in employer policy. The law, as stressed earlier, went to great lengths to protect employers' property and freedom to use their property pretty much as they saw fit, while

providing little or no protection of workers' freedom to organize to protect their jobs and livelihoods.

That source of inequity or injustice has been largely corrected, in principle at least, by legislation passed during and since World War II. But a basic inconsistency in ideology and policy remains, and it is one that goes far towards explaining the scope and frequency of industrial conflict in Canada. It consists of an industrial relations system in which, on the one hand, employer and union spokesmen proclaim an ideology of maximum freedom, of "free enterprise", "free" unions and "free" collective bargaining while, on the other hand, they depend upon a highly complex and somewhat rigid system of laws and administrative procedures to govern their relations with one another. This point merits some elaboration.

Employers in Canada, to begin with, perhaps more than in any country other than the United States, are firmly wedded, in principle at least, to the ideology of so-called "free enterprise". Publications of The Canadian Manufacturers' Association, the Chamber of Commerce and other business or employer groups, continually extol in the strongest terms the virtues of competition among and freedom of action for business enterprises. Maximum efficiency, it is argued, can be assured only if employers are protected from interference by external bodies, whether governments or trade unions, and enjoy maximum freedom in investment, price and output policy (including the freedom to close down their plants and lay off workers when business is unprofitable). But such freedom has led employers to depend increasingly on government to enact and enforce laws that will protect them against strikes or other activities of organized labour that would interrupt production or infringe unduly upon management prerogatives.

Union spokesmen, for their part, uphold the ideals of workers' freedom to organize into unions, and freedom to strike, picket and boycott. To achieve such freedoms has likewise led the trade union movement in Canada to depend upon governments to enact and enforce laws that will protect them against various anti-union policies and practices of employers. But such protection has been achieved only at the cost of laws on behalf of employers that put sharp restrictions on unions' freedom of action.

Pressure from both groups has thus led, as noted, to the evolution of an extremely complex system of laws governing a wide variety of matters of substance and procedure concerning union and employer organization, collective bargaining, labour disputes and conflicts. In brief, the legal framework surrounding industrial relations in Canada has become so complex and pervasive that legal violations and recourse to illegal actions are frequent and perhaps unavoidable.

A further complication arises from certain weaknesses and limitations in union and employer organization. The trade union movement in Canada, as numerous unionists and others have pointed out, has certain weaknesses and limitations in its structure. It is organized largely on the United States model, and is comprised primarily of subsidiary branches of AFL-CIO international unions. A union structure and bargaining policy appropriate for a nation of almost 200 million people and more than 16 million union members is inappropriate for a nation of only 20 million with less than 2 million union members. There are too many unions with limited jurisdiction that are unable to negotiate effectively with employers over broad issues or to represent and "service" their membership adequately. Many of them probably

could not have survived had they not enjoyed legal protection and government conciliation services.

Many employers, likewise, are ineffectively organized for dealing with unions. The prevailing ideology of free enterprise and competition, even in industries where there is a high degree of monopoly or oligopoly, in many cases has rendered them unable or unwilling to form into employer associations that can bargain effectively with organized labour on a broad front. As noted earlier, only a minority of collective bargaining agreements are negotiated on a multi-employer market-wide or industry-wide scale.

These weaknesses in organization on both sides further contribute to the above-noted excessive dependence upon legal prescriptions and procedures, despite union and employer ideologies that profess to uphold maximum freedom from government control. They lead, further, to weaknesses or ineffectiveness in collective bargaining and therefore to frustration and unrest. These in turn conduce to a relatively high frequency of conflict and illegality.

Barring major changes in organizational structure, ideology and attitudes on both sides, employers and unions alike, the possibilities would seem limited of attempting to reduce the scope, range and intensity of conflict merely through changes in legislation and administrative procedures.

BROAD SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

The specific types of issues and limitations discussed above have been part of the Canadian scene for many years. They do not in themselves explain the recurrent "waves" of industrial conflict that reach "peaks" every two or three decades, as in 1919-20, 1946-47 and 1965-66. Any adequate explanation of these must take account of larger forces in the economic and social environment.

Again the question arises: does the combination of circumstances that generated the wave of conflict of 1965-66 constitute an entirely new situation? Are we indeed living in a new Age of Revolution, as some observers allege? Or is this merely the latest version of a basically similar behaviour pattern of conflict that recurs every few decades? The specific issues generating industrial conflict, and the social and economic environment in which it occurs, of course, differ considerably over a period of several decades. But the manifestations of such conflict, in response to whatever issues generate widespread dissatisfaction and unrest, may tend to follow similar patterns, as portrayed in large and bitter strikes, mob violence, property damage, defiance of the law, and intervention of police or armed forces.

Particularly does this tend to be the case, perhaps, when one or two major factors in the economic and social environment are similar in widely separated periods. Thus the period from 1900 to 1920 was certainly an "Age of Violence" similar in some respects to the present day. In Canada it was also an age featuring a young and rapidly growing labour force, a large proportion of whom, as new immigrants, were uprooted and "alienated" young and single males. It was also an age of rapid

technological and economic change and of new radical ideologies that attacked the prevailing system of power, privilege, and values inherited from the Nineteenth Century. The hardships, injustices and breakdown created by World War I contributed further to discrediting the established order. All of these, in the face of hostility and resistance to change from employers and governments alike in Canada, helped generate widespread attitudes of revolt among workers, union and non-union alike, that provoked the unprecedented wave of strikes and violence during 1919-20.

Again, one could draw some parallels between the 1930's and today, despite the fact that the earlier period was one of severe depression while the present is one of unprecedented prosperity. The birth rate of the Canadian population was unusually high prior to World War I, due to heavy immigration and the low average age of the labour force. This led, in turn, to an unusually large increase in the number of people reaching working age during the Depression Thirties. The combination of a rapidly increasing labour supply in a period of shrinking demand made the depression doubly severe in its effects. Severe unemployment, wage-cuts, inadequate relief and other hardships created an explosive situation. Again, the prevailing systems of institutions and ideas was discredited in the eyes of many people, particularly younger workers. Revolutionary ideologies and violent programs of action had a new and widespread appeal.

That the situation did not reach a truly explosive stage in Canada could probably be attributed largely to the new prosperity and full employment brought about by World War II, and major changes in labour legislation and in various social security measures enacted by the federal government during the latter stages of the war. These "took the heat off" labour dissatisfaction and unrest to a considerable degree.

The "explosion", when it finally occurred in the wave of large and protracted strikes during 1945-47, was not accompanied by such a degree of violence and illegality as had occurred previously in 1919-20 and in some years of the depression.

The wave of industrial unrest and conflict of the mid-sixties resembles its predecessors in some respects, as noted, not only in scope but also in the widespread violence and illegality that accompanied it. The reactions of employers and governments however, were generally far less severe and violent than in pre-war decades. The issues generating the unrest also appear to have been more subtle and complex and far more removed from major problems of war and depression.

The comparatively extreme degree of turbulence reached in industrial relations in Canada in recent years therefore seems understandable only in the context of a number of broad socio-psychological forces more or less peculiar to the times. They have been the subject of widespread speculation and analysis at all levels, from the academic and scientific to the popular and sensational. Most of these forces, as discussed below, tend to be associated in the public mind primarily with the United States, in which they have been expressed most dramatically, and often violently. However, greatly improved transportation and communication facilities; filial or subsidiary relationships between unions, employers and other groups on both sides of the border; the growing United States economic and cultural dominance—all these and other influences give major developments in the United States a powerful impact in Canada.

(a) Age Distribution. Perhaps the most important single development bringing important changes in the industrial scene—and beyond that,

in the larger political scene and in the tempo and quality of life generally—is a basic matter of demography. Specifically there has been and is an unusually rapid influx of younger workers in their late teens and early twenties into the labour force over the past decade or more. The relative conservatism, complacency and tranquility of the 1950's was explained in a preceding chapter as being due partly to the unusually small proportion of workers in the younger age group. This was a direct result of the extremely low birth rates of the 1930's and war years. The 1960's, by contrast, was the beginning of a period of unusually rapid growth in the younger age groups in the population, and in the labour force particularly, due to the unusually high birth rates of the late 1940's coupled with the rapid growth in output and employment during the 1960's. Already it is estimated that almost one-half of the total Canadian population is under the age of twenty-five.

This development is bound to have tremendous repercussions in many directions—politically, culturally, economically and, of course, in industrial relations—as it already has. Apart from the conjunction of other factors or forces discussed earlier, a sharp change in the age structure of a population in this direction almost inevitably brings drastic changes in attitudes and behaviour-patterns. One does not have to overdo the clichés about youth being more radical and idealistic, more energetic and impatient for change, etc., to accept the validity of this broad generalization. As politicians and administrators in many different types of institutions are finding, the mere fact of numbers alone is giving younger people a new sense of power.

As regards growth in numbers and proportions of the younger age groups entering the labour force, therefore, the 1960's broadly resembles, in an even more pronounced trend, the preceding periods of 1900-13 and the 1930's.

(b) A combination of these circumstances tends to make the younger age groups not only a rapidly growing element but a militant and aggressive one as well—at least, important minorities among them. Some commentators have coined the phrase the "Explosive Generation". For one thing, as has been pointed out so often by so many, it is a generation that has no memories or experiences of the Great Depression or of World War II and the deprivations these imposed. Raised in an "Age of Affluence" they have become accustomed to high material standards of living and have expectations that seem extreme to older people accustomed to the standards of previous decades.

Crispo and Arthurs seem to attribute these high or exaggerated expectations largely to advertising and the strong impact that it has had on workers living in a society dominated by middle class values. To quote:

...Society has institutionalized the business of creating discontent, by developing a whole new profession whose members might best be described as 'merchants of discontent'. Of course it would be naive to suggest that our acquisitive instincts would disappear if we were not constantly bombarded by hidden and not-so-hidden persuaders. We merely point out that middle class mores have been accepted by the organized worker in his capacity as consumer, and that consequently middle class purchasing power is his immediate objective in collective bargaining. On this phenomenon we make no moral judgement, but we do observe that advertisers may be able to merchandize discontent more effectively than unions and their leaders can manage it. 4/

The impact of this factor, however, has differed considerably in the late 1960's as compared to the 1950's and on younger and older age

groups. Presumably as between individuals comparable in age, occupation, income and other variables, the gap between income and aspirations was no greater in the 1960's than in the 1950's. Why, therefore, were union leaders and members apparently less militant then, in boom periods at least, than now?

One answer suggested earlier is that in the 1950's most workers, union leaders and members alike, constituted an older group that had experienced the insecurities and deprivations of ten years of depression and more than five years of war (though, of course, many, if not most, gained economically in the war years). Rapid postwar economic expansion enabled most of them to enjoy far larger incomes and other benefits than ever before. For the first time in their lives they had been able to acquire homes, cars, household appliances and various other "status symbols", in most cases having to incur long-term debt commitments to do so. The emphasis, as noted, was on security and material accumulation, and there was a willingness to submit to monotony on the job, conformity to "the boss" and other requirements for "getting ahead". To the extent that union members during the 1950's acquired middle class standards and sought middle class incomes, therefore, they tended to become less rather than more militant.

A large and growing proportion of younger workers in the 1960's, not having experienced the deprivations of their elders, in the nature of the case have different attitudes and values and are not impressed with the appurtenances and status symbols that their elders have acquired, nor with the supposed virtues and sacrifices involved in their acquisition. Indeed, in a large and growing number of cases there is outright rejection and revolt. Many young people today, understandably, express contempt for their

elders' "materialism", their preoccupation with accumulating visible status symbols, and their willingness to sacrifice freedom and self-respect and conform to the dictates of the "boss" or of the organization.

One expression of this revolt is to "cop out of the rat-race" and opt for poverty. Self-respect and freedom of expression, it is felt, require one to reject the steady well-paid job and promising career, the split-level house in the suburbs and other material "binds" and consciously follow a non-conformist way of life. One sub-species of this type is, of course, the much-publicized "hippies". Another perhaps more positive group comprises those often classed as the "new radicals" or "New Left", as well as many engaged in such groups as the Peace Corps, the Company of Young Canadians, and others. A high proportion of both groups appear to be the products of universities and come from middle-class homes.

Another species developing out of this widespread rejection and revolt in the midst of affluence comprises the large and growing numbers of younger people who have expensive tastes and aspirations that provide excitement and diversion of a kind lacking in most affluent middle class and better-paid working class home environments. Such are many of the drivers of fast sports cars and participants in "drag races", the motorcycle gangs of the "Hell's Angels" type, the "ski bums" and "surfers", etc. Often they express a contempt for the older generation's willingness to accept the low wages and long hours of the past, to scrimp and scrounge and sacrifice themselves to a life of monotonous work. Younger workers of this type often have a tenuous commitment to their jobs and to the labour market generally, but they demand and attempt to get the highest pay they can in the jobs they do. A higher proportion of the "affluent casuals" of this

type seem to come from working class backgrounds, as compared to the high proportion of middle-class "rejects" among the "hippies" and "new left". They appear to have contributed a particularly militant new element to the rank-and-file of some unions. It seems apparent in the union demands, labour disputes and strikes of the mid-1960's that hourly rates of pay, shorter hours and longer holidays were and are much more to the forefront as issues than before, in comparison to the preoccupation with pensions, job security and minimum income guarantees characteristic of the 1950's.

(c) Reinforcing the above trends is the fact that younger workers today have had longer periods of schooling, and a higher quality of education generally, than had their prototypes of earlier years. This asset has inculcated them with a greater degree of skepticism and a propensity to challenge what hitherto have been accepted assumptions, values, mores and, in general, ways of doing things. It also encourages young people to have higher aspirations, not just for money but for the "quality of life" generally, as measured by opportunities for leisure and recreation, variety of experience, challenge and creativity in jobs. It perhaps renders the individual less willing and able to accept, resignedly, the monotony, bureaucratic regimentation and submission to authority that is imposed by the discipline of the modern industrial system. Many individuals are thereby rendered more vulnerable to frustration and more inclined to "cop out". In the aggregate this tends to show up in higher labour "turnover" and in more wildcat strikes. These propensities are enhanced in periods of relatively full employment in a general context of at least minimum security provided by the "welfare state". Feelings of independence of younger male workers are perhaps further enhanced in this regard by the availability of "the Pill" and the sharply declining birth-rates in Canada since 1958, together with the greatly increased proportion of married women who are working.

(d) Deriving from these trends, there is the wholesale rejection, again largely among younger people, of traditional authority, ethics, morals, and ideologies. Among the more highly publicized manifestations are the so-called "sexual revolution", the widespread experimentation with marijuana, LSD, and other drugs, and the "far-out" new styles of music, art, and dress. Mass protest movements have occurred on a scale unheard of since the Great Depression. These have been exemplified most notably in the "civil rights" movements in the Southern states; the Berkeley-style "uprisings" of students at the University of California, Columbia University and other institutions; and parades, marches and mass picketing against the war in Viet Nam. Most spectacular and violent, of course, has been the massive rejection by Negroes, and again particularly by the younger element, of their traditional "Uncle Tom" role in white society.

It is to be expected that this widespread revolt against traditional authority—in the home, and in governments at all levels—should carry over into the industrial relations scene, and be manifested in rejection of or opposition to the authority of the employer and of the trade union official. Particularly does this tend to be the case in view of the increasing trend towards bureaucratization, regimentation and impersonality in large organizations. And it appears to have carried over into widespread rejection of the authority of the law. Established laws have come under increasing attack for being obsolete, outmoded and downright unjust as regards such matters as divorce, birth control, abortion, and the use of marijuana. There has been growing rejection of laws governing such issues. Similarly with laws governing labour relations, particularly as regards the issuance by courts of injunctions governing strikes and picketing.

(e) And finally, as regards the larger environment, this is an "Age of Violence". The use, or over-use, of this phrase over a period of several decades has made it a cliché. But the mounting scope and fury of the violence that has engulfed the United States during the past five years particularly seem to make it a valid generalization. The widespread propensity to violence has been attributed by various writers to a number of broad forces and trends besides those outlined above. These include the protracted, brutal and frustrating American involvement in Viet Nam which has divided the United States more than any other conflict since the Civil War more than a century ago; the exaggerated hopes and disappointments generated by the widely-publicized program for the "Great Society", which the burdens of the Viet Nam War have made impossible to implement; and more specifically, the extreme frustrations of the Negro minority, whose hopes and expectations, aroused by a series of major legal enactments and historic Supreme Court decisions during the latter 1950's and early 1960's, have been blocked by continued poverty, unemployment, the restrictions of ghetto living, and continued non-acceptance of Negroes to positions of full equality in white society. Certainly the ghetto uprisings of Negroes in the major metropolitan and industrial centres of the United States over the past few years have constituted the most massive violence, among civilians, in the entire history of a notably violent society. Deaths have been in the hundreds, personal injuries in the thousands, and property damage in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Violence has also been publicized, and glamourized, more widely and probably more effectively over the past 10 years than in any comparable period in the past. This generalization applies particularly to the most effective and dramatic media of communications, namely, movies and television. 5/

Trade unions have not been directly involved in the more dramatic cases of mass violence such as the civil rights disturbances, the "peace" marches, and the ghetto uprisings of Negroes. Indeed, organized labour tends to be looked upon by many Negro leaders and by spokesmen of the New Left as part of the "Establishment", in so far as it represents generally the more secure and better-paid one-third of the paid labour force.

But it has undoubtedly been influenced by these developments and the violent conflicts they have engendered. This would be particularly true, perhaps, among large groups of younger rank-and-file members in the larger trade unions. Organized labour has a long tradition of being fighter for the "underdog" and a long history of having to face repression and violence from authorities. The younger element in the trade union movement, as the less privileged group within the union establishment, perhaps tends to identify more with the underprivileged minorities generally and to carry over into the industrial scene an attitude of revolt and a willingness to engage in violence and illegality in pursuit of what they feel to be justified goals.

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- 1/ John Vanderkamp, "The Time Pattern of Industrial Conflict in Canada, 1901-66".
- 2/ Quoted from L. Greespan, "Wages and Wildcats", op. cit., p. 244.
- 3/ Ed. Finn, "Why Canadian Workers Are Kicking", op. cit.
- 4/ J.H. Crispo and H.W. Arthurs, "Industrial Unrest in Canada: a Diagnosis of Recent Experience", op. cit., pp. 20-21.
- 5/ See particularly, Frederick Wertham, M.D., The Mark of Cain.

APPENDIX A

UNEMPLOYED DEMONSTRATIONS AND RIOTS IN VANCOUVER

DURING THE EARLY 1930's*

Around this time, I took part in a big demonstration of unemployed, I think it was one of the last ones in the campaign against the "gunny sack" parade. The routine was simply, assemble on Cambie St. grounds, speakers would address the crowds, a delegation would be elected to address the City Council, and then march off in columns of four down Cambie and east, on Hastings Street, to the City Hall which was then a suite of offices in the Holden Building.

We did not arrive in very large numbers at the City Hall, although a few thousand men and women took part in the march. On the route of march, lined up in the side streets, were squads of mounted city police, R.C.M.P., and Provincials. They were lined up on Abbott, Pender, and Cordova, and beyond the City Hall were the small squad of mounted police under Sgt. Scanlon, that squad which gained hated renown and were always referred to as the cossacks.

Their job was to take care of any of the marchers who broke through to the City Hall. There were always some who broke through and mostly the delegation managed to get there, often to be arrested by the city foot police who were inside the Holden Building guarding His Worship the Mayor and Council.

*The account following is from R. Liversedge, Reflections on the On-to-Ottawa Trek (Vancouver, Broadway Printers, no date). Liversedge was an active participant in many such actions. His description of riot proceedings and tactics, while highly coloured, would seem to be a fairly accurate and realistic picture as remembered by this writer, after having observed a half-dozen or more of such occurrences.

As the head of the column of marchers reached half way between Abbott and Carral Streets on Hastings, the order would be given to the police to charge, and from all quarters would come club swinging horsemen charging into the crowd. The column would be broken up into a hundred smaller groups, milling around, running, fighting, screaming, some already down on the side walk with broken scalps, here a horseman cut off from his squad and surrounded by a crowd of unemployed. The fight would spread out into the side streets, and it would be an hour or more before the streets were cleared.

Meanwhile, a hundred or so of men and women would have reached the city hall, and then the cossacks would go into action with their long lead-tipped sticks. This squadron, never more than a dozen riders, I saw in action on many occasions, and I think that they were responsible for more broken heads and other injuries than all the larger groups of the R.C.M.P. and Provincials combined.

Whatever one could say of their mental outlook, and it would take a psychiatrist to name the reason for their sadism, one had to admit their superb horsemanship. Well trained, horse and rider acting as one, the rider could drop the reins, guiding his mount with the knees, leaving the hands free for work with the club. They were hard to combat, and were always finally able to clear the stragglers from the streets.

APPENDIX B

RELIEF CAMPS IN THE EARLY 1930's *

The fatal error of the government was in placing the camps under the Department of National Defence and making the King's Rules and Orders K.R. & O. the procedural Bible. This step guaranteed that whatever grievance did develop in the camp would be bottled up until it reached explosive proportions. No organization of any kind was permitted in any camp, and no petition could be circulated, and no committee could be formed to complain about anything. Anyone with a grievance could take it to the foreman of his gang, then appeal to the foreman of the sub-camp or the supervisor of the project. But he could do it only by himself without the vocal or moral support of a comrade. Anyone who tried to organize a protest in a camp faced expulsion and in some camps that meant being expelled in mid-winter at the camp gates a hundred miles from the nearest habitation. Perhaps few of the men in the camps would have joined a Relief Camp Workers' Union if it could have been organized. But the fact that no organization was permitted became a rankling grievance.

Equally to blame for morale trouble in the camps was the pay of twenty cents per day. There was something about that twenty cents per day that came to symbolize everything that was wrong with the lives of everybody on relief. It affronted human dignity as little else could have done. It was just the right size to be insulting.

Underlying these main defects of the camp system was a host of picayune grievances. In addition to the twenty cents per day, the men also got a tobacco allowance - based on 1.45 cents per day for each day in camp. Thus, before a newcomer was able to get a ten-cent package of tobacco, he had to get seven days of camp life behind him. Because the camps were established as a

* The description that follows is from Gray, The Winter Years (Macmillan, Toronto, 1966).

temporary measure to meet a condition that was expected to pass away next year, many were devoid of recreational facilities. There was no place for a hockey rink or baseball diamond and no equipment for either game. In many remote camps, outside communication ceased when a rickety radio went dead. There was little reading material and no means of pursuing an education or a hobby. Nobody was allowed to have a camera in camp.

APPENDIX C

RIOT OF UNEMPLOYED IN THE HUDSON'S BAY DEPARTMENT STORE, VANCOUVER, B.C., MAY 1935 *

Here is what happened that day of the Hudson Bay imbroglio, and Gerry McGeer's (Mayor of Vancouver) riot act. The three divisions of strikers were out on a routine march, each division taking a different district. The reason for the dispersal of our forces over a wide area were many, but the main reason was that this manoeuvre dispersed our enemy, the police, who were set to watch our movements. The police dearly loved a compact target, one on which they could converge from all sides, surround and bash into submission.

We always tried to avoid giving them that opportunity, not from any fear (for all our members held them in contempt and actually welcomed a clash), but from the fact that our objective was not civil disturbance, but the abolition of the slave camp system. These marches were for publicity purposes to keep up the morale of our forces, enhance our esprit de corps, and proved on the whole a healthy influence during our strike.

On the day of which I write, my division, three, marched west on Hastings, then south on Granville with no windows broken. At the head of the division, chosen as the leader of the march for that day, was my friend, Jack. It must be mentioned here that due to previous marches and demonstrations all the large department stores had guards at each of the doors to their stores.

We marched in good style, singing our songs and chanting our slogans, "Down with the Slave Camps" and "Work and Wages". At Granville and Georgia, Jack swung the division east on Georgia, and then north on Seymour, and right away noticing that the Seymour entrance to the Hudson Bay Store was, for some unknown reason, unguarded, he wheeled left and marched the division on to the main floor of the store.

* This description is quoted from Liversedge's eye-witness account (op. cit.).

It was a golden opportunity not to be passed up, and for anything that followed, the only part of the blame that the relief camp workers could assume was in making the tactical error of remaining on the main floor, and thus allowing the stupid police to be tempted to evict us.

We were in the store for over thirty minutes before the police arrived. Jack had made a nice speech to the shoppers which was well received, another comrade said a few words, and we were actually on the point of marching out and back to headquarters when the police arrived. There were probably a hundred of them, they marched in and lined up opposite our ranks.

Immediately a tense situation developed, the rank and file of the police detachment were very obviously nervous. There was no attempt at parleying, no negotiations. There followed a period (which lasted for over fifteen minutes) of staring each other down, with the police leaders seemingly studying their chances of a successful eviction. There could have been telephone conversations going on with police headquarters, but of that I have no knowledge, and I also do not know where the final order to draw batons and charge came from, but come it did, and resulted in a particularly vicious shambles. As usual, the camp workers did not submit peacefully, and despite the handicap of having no weapons, and facing big men with clubs, they put up a terrific resistance.

In the heat of battle, of course some show cases were damaged. A special squad of police were detailed off to get Jack. The old, heavy, primitive mentality of the police throughout the ages, of "get the ringleaders", forgetting that the system had made ringleaders of us all.

At any rate, Jack took a terrific clubbing and in his delirium lashed out, in an attempt at self defense, and damaged a show case, for which he subsequently served three months in Oakalla jail.

Meanwhile, the battle raged, and we were being steadily evicted. More police arrived, about a dozen arrests took place, many of us received cracked heads and bruised bodies. I received four cracked ribs, and the police did not come off unscathed. It would have been OK with us if the "do" had ended at that. We had made an error, and taken a temporary defeat which to us was part of the business, but news had spread like lightning, the other divisions were on the way to our defense, along with hundreds of enraged citizens. The whole police force were on the streets, the cossacks were in action, and engagements were taking place all over down-town Vancouver.

The result was that the mayor, Gerry McGeer, was rushed to Victory Square to read the riot act, and the camp workers lined up in their divisions and in the interests of peace, marched off the streets to their respective headquarters and in the late afternoon, an uneasy peace once more descended upon Vancouver.

APPENDIX D

THE "CAPTURE" OF THE CITY MUSEUM IN VANCOUVER, MAY, 1935*

The program was for Division One to immediately march to Spencer's Store, give the impression that they were going to enter the store, keeping marching around, and draw the people together. Ten minutes later, Division Two would march to Woodward's Store in a similar diversionary move, and as soon as we, Division Three, in the Ukrainian Labor Temple, got word that the police had been diverted to Spencer's and Woodward's, we would march in quick time to Main and Hastings, enter the museum over the public library, turn out all the occupants and barricade ourselves in.

As soon as we were ensconced in the museum the other two divisions would inform the public of what had happened and start a move to Main and Hastings drawing the people there in our defense.

Our strategy committee had picked wisely and well. The museum for a city the size of Vancouver was rather small. One big room with angles and alcoves, and corners crowded with historical, artistic, cultural, anthropological exhibits and artefacts, some good oil painting and taxidermy, most of which was irreplaceable.

We were virtually sure that there would be no attempt to evict us. From the point of view of defense, there could not have been another building in all Vancouver so "ideally constituted". There was one entrance which was also the exit across which a sliding steel grille-work kind of door could be drawn, and at the back of the room, a small door leading to a staircase, twisting and narrow, up which only one person at a time could come.

*The following extracts, from Liversedge's account (op. cit.), provide some idea of the tactics of the Communist-organized Relief Camp Workers Union, as well as the tense atmosphere in Vancouver during the strike.

The boys rounded up the very few visitors who were there and herded them out, and we drew the iron grille door and barricaded ourselves in. All the time, Tom had been busy on the phone, the first call being to contact outside informing them that we were in possession. That information was immediately transferred to the other two divisions, at Spencers and Woodward's, who instantly started a movement of the people to the museum before the police woke up to the fact and finally disconnected us from our service.

The divisions had done a swell job. Within fifteen or twenty minutes of us taking over the museum, they had mobilized a demonstration of thousands of people outside the museum.

It was the first wave of a demonstration comprising tens of thousands of people. There was no way of judging just how many people took part. Crowds were coming in from all over Vancouver all day, some were leaving to return later, but it is a fact that for eight hours (the time it took to break down Mayor McGreer) no traffic of any description moved over many blocks of downtown Vancouver.

The means of raising the donations of food, etc. was a wicker basket and a couple of hundred feet of light, strong line which was miraculously discovered in a corner of the museum where there had been nothing the day before.

All the bake shops for blocks around were sending bread, pastries and pies; the stores, the delicatessens, and the cafes were contributing. From the White Lunch down the street came gallon cream cans filled with hot coffee. People in the crowd below were sending up tobacco and cigarettes and candies and chocolate bars. Later in the evening when many of the boys in the museum began to suffer with headaches (probably from over-eating and smoking) a request via the basket quickly brought half a dozen bottles of aspirin tablets. We were overwhelmed with good things.

APPENDIX E

THE "ON-TO-OTTAWA TREK" OF THE RELIEF CAMP WORKERS' UNION, JUNE, 1935*

The 'army' was divided into companies and sections, and each group elected a chairman and marshal. As it moved from city to city, the discipline that was maintained would have done an elite corps proud. Rigid rules of public conduct were maintained. Panhandling was forbidden and cleanliness was a prime requirement. Expulsion from the trek was the penalty imposed for any serious offence. The latter might include theft of any kind, drunkenness, or even refusal to attend meetings.

Establishment of a record for exemplary conduct was a stroke of public-relations genius. To the general public, these boys were not hoodlums looking for trouble. They were clean-cut young Canadians who were tired of being pushed around and wanted something better than relief-camp life. This was the impression they left everywhere, on the people of the cities and towns as they passed, even on the reporters who joined their trek from time to time - able reporters like Fred Griffin, Charles Woodsworth, and Fred Johnson. None of us who wrote about the trek was completely dispassionate. There was a lot of built-in bias on the side of the strikers, even though we tried to keep it from showing.

After the itinerary of the trek was announced, committees sprang to life in all the centres where the tour would stop. These semi-official groups arranged for billeting the trekkers in rinks or exhibition grounds, pressured authorities to open soup-kitchens or provide meal tickets, arranged for tag-days and donations of clothes and tobacco. It was a leisurely schedule the organizers had worked out. There would be one-day stops at Kamloops and Golden, three days in Calgary, a day each in Medicine Hat, Moose Jaw, Regina, and Brandon, four days in Winnipeg, two in Fort William, two in Port Arthur, one in Sudbury and two in Toronto.

* The following account is from Gray, The Winter Years, op. cit.

The organizers of the trek made one fatal mistake: they assumed that the C.P.R. would be content to let the men ride their trains all the way from Vancouver to Ottawa. Instead, the railway demanded that the federal government enforce the Railway Act, which specifically excluded trespassing on freight trains. The day after the trek started the Royal Canadian Mounted Police announced in Winnipeg that the trek would be halted. But when it moved unmolested into Calgary and out again three days later, the conviction grew that the authorities were bluffing. However, the government had been quietly concentrating the Mounties at Regina, and when enough strength was built up to stop the trek the government announced that Regina was the end of the line.

APPENDIX F

THE REGINA RIOT, DOMINION DAY, 1935

There are several versions of the riot itself. The Canadian Annual Review's brief account is as follows:

Leaders of the relief strikers called a mass meeting of their followers and sympathizers in the market square of Regina for the evening of July 1 and in addition to the strikers thousands of Regina citizens attended. The R.C.M.P. and the Regina city police decided on this meeting as a suitable occasion for the arrest of leaders. Shortly after eight o'clock in the evening forces of both bodies marched into the square as the meeting was in progress. Panic ensued. The police were attacked and fighting and rioting developed and continued for some three hours. Detective Charles Millar of the Regina city police lost his life, being beaten to death by rioters using sticks and other weapons. Approximately 100 persons, including several members of the R.C.M.P. and city police, were injured, several seriously. Much property damage was caused. In the course of the attacks on the police shots were fired by the city police although the R.C.M.P. did not use guns. The police brought the situation under control, some 80 men being arrested.

Gray's account of the riot is somewhat at variance with this:

In Regina, however, everything was irrevocably set on a collision course. The strikers were getting ready for a mass meeting later in the afternoon on the Market Square. The Mounted Police had received orders from Ottawa to arrest the strike leaders when they turned up for the meeting. The arrests set off the bloodiest riot in almost twenty years.

The old Market Square in Regina was only a block from the police station and there were between 3,500 and 4,500 strikers and spectators on the square when, on a whistled signal, the city police moved towards the speakers' platform from one side of the square while the R.C.M.P. marched in from the other. In a moment, panic seized the crowd, the air was filled with stones and clubs, and the riot was on. Where self-defence broke off and frenzy began became blurred. Spectators fled in terror, or joined strikers in beating back the attacks

from the police. Policemen who were wrestled to the ground were beaten and kicked. Bystanders who chose to run at the wrong time, or in the wrong direction, were clubbed down by the police. Cars were overturned and barricades erected.

From the Market Square, the riot surged back and forth onto Eleventh Avenue for three hours. Every store-window between Scarth and Cornwall was shattered. Tear-gas filled Tenth and Eleventh avenues and the Mounties rode up and down on horseback to break up the rioters. At the end of the riot, a city detective, Charles Millar, was dead, a dozen policemen had been seriously injured, half a dozen civilians had been shot, and more than 100 had been injured by police clubs or rocks thrown by strikers. In addition to the eight trek leaders, the Mounties took thirty-six people into custody, and the city police arrested forty.

Still another version of the riot's beginning, and Det. Sgt. Millar's death, is given in Liversedge's highly partisan account:

Dominion Day, 1935, our country's birthday, and what a birthday celebration it turned out to be! The meeting that evening on Market Square, while not being as big as most meetings we had held, still had a substantial audience. There were probably fifteen hundred men and women, townspeople, some with their children, on that nice summer evening. It hadn't been thought necessary for a full turnout of the trekkers, as the meeting was to inform the people of Regina what we, the trekkers, already knew.

There were probably four or five hundred of us on the Market Square, and there would be two or three hundred still having supper, or walking around town. The vast bulk of our men were watching two ball games out at the Exhibition Grounds.

The meeting wasn't long under way. Evans was speaking, when four large furniture vans backed up, one to each corner of the Market Square. A shrill whistle blasted out a signal, the backs of the vans were lowered and out poured the Mounties, each armed with a baseball bat.

They must have been packed very tightly in those vans, there were lots of them. In their first mad, shouting, club-swinging charge they killed Regina City Detective Millar, who had evidently come onto the Square to help them. In less than minutes the Market Square was a mass of writhing, groaning forms, like a battlefield.

The intensity of the violence that followed is vividly described in Liversedge's account of the first major battle after the initial police charge:

Here is where our long stress on organization and discipline paid off.

A couple of men were dispatched to thumb a ride out to the stadium, to warn all trekkers there to stay in the Exhibition Grounds, not to come down town, but to post strong guards at all entrances. On that street in Regina, we assembled under group leaders. Hilton and Paddy O'Neil took the head of the column and we had just started our march when somebody in a car coming towards us told us that there were two hundred horsemen lined across the street ahead of us, and then unmistakably from away behind came the clop-clop of a large body of horsemen.

It was to be a squeezeplay. We were not going to be allowed to get out of town. We were to be smashed up. How incredibly stupid! Immediately orders were given us to build barricades, and there was plenty of material to work with.

The street was lined with parked cars and we simply pushed them into the streets, turned them on their sides, and piled them two high. The barricades were built quickly, solidly, across the street, from wall to wall, with one narrow opening, wide enough for one man at a time to pass through, and we built quite a few, a couple of hundred feet apart.

It was then, before the first futile charge was made by the Mounties, that the miracle happened. The young boys, and even some girls, of Regina, organized our ammunition column. Without being asked, they came riding bicycles in from the side streets, their carrier baskets loaded with rocks, which they dumped behind the barricades, and then rode off for another load.

The Mounties never reached the first barricades, that is the ones at each end of the street, and the attempts which they made to get behind and in between the barricades from the side streets were all beaten back. Our defense was simple, in front of the barricade, two lines of us formed, one behind the other, right across the street, each with a good armful of big rocks. As the line of horsemen charged, we waited until they were quite close, and then the front rank let go a barrage of rocks, and as soon as their rocks were finished, down on their knees they would go, and the row of men behind had a clear field to let go their barrage.

There were casualties in every charge, and the horses couldn't face the heavy rock barrages, and always turned down the side street in front of us, often with the rider laying on the horse's neck.

Besides this main battle, there were skirmishes going on all over down town.

And again, part of Liversedge's description of another battle, this time with city police:

All at once they started to come, and our group leaders gave the order, "Line up, boys, here they come!" We took our positions across the street. Three lines of us, heavily armed with rocks. The blue coats marched towards us, as on parade, stately and unhurried, steadily coming towards us. It was a psychological attack, but nobody's nerve broke.

As the cops drew quite near, with nobody running and no missiles coming yet, they showed some uneasiness. Then came the command from our leader, "Now, boys, and make it good!"

The blue coats tried to keep coming, but as one and then another went down, they broke, and our first rank went after them. To escape our attack, the retreating bobbies drew their revolvers and opened fire. It was the heaviest gunfire of the night, and half a dozen of our boys were wounded. (That night forty of the trekkers received gunshot wounds.)

APPENDIX G

STRIKES IN SOREL, QUEBEC DURING 1937*

A number of local syndicats had been newly organized in Sorel during 1936. The next year two main strikes were called in a demand for wage increases and other concessions, and for union recognition. These generated "intimidation, assault, riots, property damage, sabotage, thefts, fires, and numerous arrests and jail sentences." (Provost, p. 2).

The first of these strikes, involving workers in several metallurgical plants, began on May 3, 1937, and lasted till the end of the month. On the nights of May 24 and 25 several windows were broken in the building of the Ateliers Mécaniques de Sorel, as well as at the residence of Eugène Gendron, superintendent of the Chantiers Manseau (shipyards). Two days later some windows were likewise broken at the residence of Napoléon Latraverse, President General of the Syndicats Catholiques de Sorel. About an hour later, in the course of a riot, considerable damage was caused at the following: Les Ateliers Mécaniques de Sorel; Sorel Steel Foundries; Sorel Iron Foundries; and at the residences of Ludger Simard, Eugène Gendron and some others - all managers or superintendents.

*The account that follows is translated from the detailed notes and testimony, based on a variety of sources, compiled by Alphonse Provost, in *Les Grèves de Sorel* (Stenographie, Sorel, 1938). Provost's volume of notes provides a remarkable and vivid picture of the degree to which industrial conflict has at times virtually torn a community apart. It is unfortunate that there has not been similar documentation of many other comparable situations that have occurred from time to time in Canadian labour history.

Twelve persons were arrested in connection with these incidents, six of whom were found guilty and given sentences of one to six months (Ibid., pp. 2-3). Arthur Simard testified in court that pickets forcefully prevented supervisors having access to the struck plants, and systematically harassed him and his family by banging on pieces of iron outside his home and shining flashlights in his bedroom window at 2 a.m., cutting his telephone wire, and breaking street lights (Ibid., pp. 11-17).

A second strike, starting August 4, was larger than the previous one, involving about 1000 employees throughout the metallurgical and shipbuilding industries of Sorel. A plant manager testified that conditions were worse, tension higher, and intimidation and property damage greater than in the earlier strike. One fire broke out on August 13, another on August 14, and two more on August 15th, all suspected of being of incendiary origin. One was at a chalet owned by the President of the Central Council of Catholic Syndicats at Montreal, one of the organizers of the strike; two were at struck plants; and one was at the home of a prominent employer (Ibid., pp. 160-165). A plant superintendent claimed that he had heard threats that his home would be dynamited (Ibid., pp. 175-6). Eighty-three provincial police, armed with rifles and revolvers were sent to Sorel to maintain order and protect persons and property.

These developments generated conflict between Church clerics (as patrons of the syndicats catholiques) and the business community and authorities of Sorel, and among clerics themselves. In a heated series of exchanges, the Mayor of Sorel wired Mgr. F-Z. Decelles, Bishop of Sainte Hyacinthe, that "your" syndicats catholiques had caused tens of thousands of dollars of damage; that the church must be held responsible, in lending its patronage to such organizations; that "while all our businessmen and executives accept the right of workers to organize into unions, they will never recognize the so-called catholic unions that we have here"; and that "it's not a strike we have here, but a revolution that makes one think of the better days of Marat and Robespierre." (Ibid., pp. 200-202).

M. l'abbé A.C. Despres, curé of Notre Dame de Sorel parish, agreed with some of these sentiments. In a sermon to his parishioners he stated his position as being "against all strikes, even the best." The current one, above all, he stated as being unjustified. Said he:

For several days this strike has been taking a turn towards a veritable revolution.... It is a struggle between the various classes of society. Friends no longer recognize friends, and one speaks only of vengeance and strife. Division reigns among families, between fathers and sons, and between neighbours, which has its source in the quarrels between those who want to work and the others who go on strike. (Ibid., pp. 206-7).

Mrg. P-S. Desranleau, Curé of St. Pierre parish, on the other hand, in a speech to an assembly of syndicats catholiques, strongly upheld the right of workers to organize, and justified the current strike. "You are defending a cause that is good....You have reason, despite the suffering, to continue the strike. It is up to you alone to make the decision, to end it, or to keep on." (Ibid., pp. 213-14) In a later sermon, he blamed the strike on "high finance" and "economic dictatorship." "The result of this false regime," he declared, "is an economic liberalism which allows riches to accumulate....That is the explanation for the present economic crisis." Organization into unions, he went on to declare, is the only means that workers have to defend their rights. "A strike is a bad thing, with bad consequences, but it is the only means that workers have to make their rights recognized." (Ibid., pp. 222-24).

Later in the year, Mgr. Desranleau was transferred to the Sherbrooke diocese. In a sermon on December 19 he blamed the transfer on a certain "clique" in Sorel, which he identified mainly with employers supported by the City Hall. He described it as "une clique vraiment diabolique" and "la plus sâle des cliques connues dans le Province," which, he asserted, "boasted of having bought the Archbishop of Quebec, and the Cardinal, to get me transferred to Sherbrooke." (Ibid., pp. 229-231).

The bitterness and violence generated during the strike carried over long after it had ended. During the civic elections of January 1938, there were numerous battles among partisans of opposing factions, in the course of which one man was fatally shot. Again, armed provincial police were dispatched to Sorel (Ibid., pp. 179-180).

Postscript: From all this, it seems particularly appropriate that Sorel was also the name of the philosophical father of anarcho-syndicalism, and author of the classic, Réflexions sur la violence!

APPENDIX H

STRIKE AT BLUBBER BAY, B.C., 1938

The following account of some incidents during the strike were given in an interview with Grant McNeil, Member of Parliament at the time, and now editor of the IWA Journal. It is probably coloured, but nonetheless illuminating. (Quoted in Phillips, op. cit., pp. 116-117).

The situation quickly deteriorated into one of violence. Terrorist tactics were employed by Company officials and their goons, dressed up in Provincial Police uniforms. The Chinese workers were evicted from their quarters under threat of clubs and tear gas.

Blubber Bay was under a police dictatorship. Colin Cameron, M.L.A., was held in police custody because he protested on behalf of the Chinese workers whose plight was pitiful. I was then a member of the House of Commons, but I was not allowed to move in the area, to the post office, to the telegraph office, or to the phone without a police escort of two acting as a Gestapo for one of the 'dangerous reds'.

As the eleven-month strike proceeded, time and time again the strikers and their families were ambushed by either the scabs, imported from Vancouver, or the police, and stoned.

Bob Gardner (the local union Vice-President), was arrested on a flimsy charge at 3 a.m. He was taken to the temporary Police station and so cruelly beaten by Constable Williamson that on the following day he was hospitalized in Powell River. While still weak from his injuries, he was sentenced to four months in Oakalla. When he was serving his sentence, the Union discovered that he was seriously ill and induced the authorities to place him in the General Hospital under police custody. Some time later he died in Nanaimo.

Defeat in this long and expensive strike almost destroyed the
I.W.A. in B.C.

APPENDIX I

THE SECOND RELIEF CAMP WORKERS STRIKE AND THE POST OFFICE RIOT, VANCOUVER, 1938*

The On-to-Ottawa trek of 1935 had ended the second phase of the unemployed struggles. The third began when, as demanded by the trekkers, the "slave camp" system was abolished following the defeat of the Conservative administration and the election of the Liberals under Mackenzie King. A committee was set up by the new government to investigate the relief camps and, while largely vindicating their administration, did recommend they be replaced by "work and wages" camps for the single unemployed. Under the new scheme, adopted by the government and administered by the Department of Labour, relief workers in the newly established railway, farm and forestry camps received fifteen dollars a month, part in cash and part in forced savings.

The remnants of the Relief Camp Workers' Union reorganized in the spring of 1936 to meet the demands of the new camps under the name of the Relief Project Workers' Union. The new body's initial demands were purely orthodox: minimum wages and the 8-hour day. However, as its predecessor, it received no official recognition and resorted again largely to propagandizing and demonstrating.

* This account is drawn mainly from Paul Phillips, op. cit., pp. 224-27.

In September of 1937 unemployment began to rise again and brought a resurgence of organization among the jobless. In both Vancouver and Victoria the Relief Project Workers were granted a non-voting seat in the labour councils, as was the Victoria Conference on Unemployment. In the following spring, eight "unemployed" organizations met with twenty-four unions, the CCF, the Communist Party, and a number of women's, youth, welfare and similar groups to form the Vancouver Citizens Council on Unemployment Insurance.

The crisis arrived shortly afterward as the provincial government started to close relief project camps, and as relief loans to the municipalities were curtailed. The result was a mass migration of single unemployed men to Vancouver, reaching six thousand by May. Under predominately Communist leadership they organized demonstrations and supported themselves largely by 'tin-canning' or street-begging. One tag day raised \$4,800. The government reacted by stopping relief to all those from the Prairies, and the city ordered a ban on all tin-canning, which left the jobless men nothing to live on. Instead they were offered free transportation back to the Prairies. On May 11th, three separate groups of men totaling twelve hundred, invaded the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Georgia Hotel and the Post Office. As described in a local newspaper account;

At three o'clock yesterday afternoon they just marched in. First they marched to the Post Office, one detachment of them, and took possession. They did not ask the Postmaster or authorities for permission to stay. They simply took over. While some 600 of the unemployed were marching into the Post Office there were 300 at the Hotel Georgia and another couple of hundred at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Demand for immediate action by the Dominion government to assure work for the 1,200 single jobless who have entrenched themselves in three Vancouver buildings was made today to Ottawa by a group of Provincial Cabinet Ministers, City Members of the Legislature and Vancouver Aldermen. With 1,200 men camped in the Georgia

and the Post Office and the Art Gallery and determined to stay there until they are given relief, the legislative Council group decided to urge Ottawa to break the dead-lock.

But Ottawa would not break the deadlock. The group at the Georgia Hotel was moved 10 days later after receiving five hundred dollars worth of relief vouchers. On Sunday morning, June 20th, after almost six weeks, the police converged on the other two buildings with the ultimatum of voluntary evacuation or forced eviction.

At the art gallery, Harold Winch, CCF leader in the Provincial Legislature, was brought in and he negotiated an orderly withdrawal although he had no official connection with the unemployed group. At the post office, conditions were different. **As described in local newspaper accounts:**

Police moved from headquarters shortly before 5:00 a.m. Between 30 and 40 automobiles laden with officers started for the Post Office and the Art Gallery. Half went to each place. The raid had been planned with the deepest secrecy but the strikers were apparently tipped off. When the cars arrived the leaders were addressing the men....As police gathered outside....Post Master J.H. Clarke, spoke to the men. He told them that he received instructions from Ottawa that they must leave the building.... 'Are we going out and submit to arrest there or should we stand inside and take what comes,' asked Brodie (the strikers' leader). Stay inside, we stay, came the answer....Quietly from a passage at the rear of the building half a dozen mounties slipped into the main rotunda covering their faces with grotesque gas masks and at their sides hung haversacks full of bombs. A contingent of other RCMP men armed with riot squirts came in behind them.... A few minutes elapsed then at 5:40 the first bomb was hurled. As it exploded with a loud pop, three more were hurled. Tear gas started to flood the floor of the building from where the bombs exploded....Almost immediately there was a tremendous crash. The big plate glass window just West of the main entrance was smashed to bits....The crash of glass mingled with the detonation of bombs and the shouting and snarling of battling men....Dozens went down under the police attack and were dragged out on to the sidewalk....Squads of mounted police that had been held in reserve raced to the scene and shoved a mass of battling jobless onto Granville and down to Cordova. Inside the Post Office....Their eyes streaming with tears they faced the relentless whips of the mounties....

(Brodie) was shoved from the Post Office by a mounted officer but almost immediately got into a struggle with two city plain clothes officers. Clubs of the two officers descended repeatedly on his head and shoulders. Finally an RCMP Sargeant stepped in and halted the beating.

The final toll was thirty-nine persons injured, including five policemen.

The damage totalled thirty thousand dollars. There were twenty-two arrests.

Giant protests erupted over the police brutality and the arrest of the participants. Between fifteen and twenty thousand persons gathered in Vancouver while two thousand marched on the Parliament Buildings in Victoria. The government, however, refused to meet any of the jobless. Shortly afterward a meeting of organizations in Vancouver united many of the jobless and sympathetic groups in the B.C. Federation of Unemployed, but its influence and contact with organized labour was minimal as the VTLC denied it a seat on the council. The improvement in employment conditions, and eventually the outbreak of war, gradually reduced the pressure of unemployment. The organized jobless had made their last pre-war headline, but they carried the militant education received from the police clubs back with them to the labour force and the unions.

APPENDIX J

PERIODES TROUBLEES - HISTORIQUE DU MALAISE SYNDICAL AU CANADA DE 1900 A 1967

RESUME

Introduction et sommaire

Le présent travail est le résultat d'une recherche entreprise pour le compte de l'Equipe spécialisée en relations du travail et dont l'objet était de constituer un dossier historique qui faciliterait l'étude de la "crise" survenue dans les relations du travail au milieu des années 60. Une question centrale a présidé à son élaboration: Dans la vague d'agitation et de grèves, de violence et d'illégalité, survenue au milieu des années 60, faut-il voir un phénomène nouveau sur la scène du travail canadienne, un fruit des conditions nouvelles, en évolution rapide, quasi révolutionnaires, et de l'époque moderne, ou bien simplement la plus récente manifestation d'un type de comportement qui, pour divers motifs, reparaît au Canada à intervalles irréguliers depuis le début du siècle?

Des problèmes particuliers de documentation obligent à centrer toute analyse historique de l'agitation syndicale canadienne surtout sur les formes ouvertes de conflit, c'est-à-dire principalement les grèves et les lock-out, ainsi que sur les tactiques qui les accompagnent habituellement, comme le piquetage et le boycottage. A cela, il faut nécessairement joindre une certaine considération d'autres manifestations, celles qui, dans un contexte

industriel, naissent facilement d'un conflit patronal-syndical, ou viennent le contrecarrer ou l'alimenter. Rangeons parmi celles-là les querelles qui opposent les groupes de races et d'ethnies différentes au sein de la population active; la rivalité intersyndicale et les grèves de juridiction; les manifestations et les émeutes de chômeurs; l'agitation politique et la formation de partis politiques radicaux; et les diverses mesures prises par les employeurs et les gouvernements, ou leurs réactions devant ces démonstrations.

Le sujet présente aussi une dimension qualitative. Il est en effet possible d'évaluer dans une grande mesure l'intensité de l'agitation et du conflit à un moment donné et à un endroit donné d'après les phénomènes qui l'accompagnent: manifestations publiques et mouvements de foule, violence, dégâts matériels et autres activités illégales, intervention et répression de la part de la police ou des forces militaires armées, personnes blessées et tuées. (A ce propos, n'oublions pas que plusieurs fois par le passé, la cause initiale de ces phénomènes a été davantage un geste du gouvernement ou de l'employeur, qu'un geste du syndicat ou des syndiqués.)

Pendant plusieurs décennies, les relations et les conflits du travail au Canada ont eu à peu de chose près les caractéristiques de ceux des Etats-Unis. Il n'y a là rien d'étonnant quand on connaît les liens très forts qui existent sur le plan de l'organisation et sur d'autres plans entre les travailleurs et les employeurs canadiens et leurs homologues américains, et la domination économique et culturelle croissante, des Etats-Unis sur le Canada. Diverses conditions particulières au Canada sont venues atténuer ces influences.

Signalons, parmi les principaux facteurs propres au domaine du travail qui influencent ou ont influencé au Canada l'agitation et les conflits sociaux, une opposition forte, persistante et parfois violente à la reconnaissance syndicale et à la négociation collective de la part de plusieurs groupements patronaux influents, une longue tradition de luttes syndicales décevantes ou peut-être irritantes par suite de la structure morcelée et décentralisée du syndicalisme canadien, un régime de négociation collective également fractionné et décentralisé, une tendance excessive des syndicats comme des employeurs à compter sur la protection gouvernementale et le réseau complexe de règles juridiques qui les régissent en conséquence, et par-dessus tout, les fluctuations aiguës de la croissance économique du Canada pendant plusieurs décennies.

Vue de haut, l'histoire des conflits du travail au Canada apparaît comme une suite de trois longues "vagues" ou trois longs "cycles". Chacun débute par un calme relatif, bientôt troublé par des incidents mineurs qui s'accroissent et deviennent une vague toujours plus ample de grèves et de conflits pour atteindre un sommet qu'on s'empresse de qualifier de "crise". Tout retombe alors dans le calme et un nouveau cycle commence. Chronologiquement, la première de ces longues vagues a pris naissance vers 1895 pour atteindre son paroxysme en 1919; la seconde s'est prolongée du début des années 1920 jusqu'à 1946-1947, et la troisième a duré de la fin des années 40 jusque dans la deuxième moitié des années 60.

En raison de la décentralisation géographique, politique et économique (et même syndicale) au Canada, l'agitation des travailleurs a surtout été un phénomène à caractère régional. La fréquence des grèves varie selon la région, l'industrie, l'année et la décennie. Ce n'est qu'en d'assez rares

occasions et sous l'impulsion d'un concours particulier de circonstances, que l'on a enregistré une vague d'agitation d'ampleur nationale. Entre les sommets cités ci-dessus, (1919, 1946-1947 et 1966), il n'y a eu que quelques poussées de moindre envergure, soit 1912, 1937 et 1943, où le mouvement avait une cause, une portée et un caractère d'ordre national.

Soucieux de faciliter l'analyse et la description historique, les rédacteurs de la présente étude ont cru bon de répartir la matière entre sept chapitres représentant chacun une période assez arbitrairement découpée:

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Avant la Première Guerre mondiale | 1900-1913 |
| 2. La Première Guerre mondiale et l'après-guerre | 1914-1920 |
| 3. Les années 20 | 1921-1929 |
| 4. Les années 30 | 1930-1939 |
| 5. La Deuxième Guerre mondiale et l'expansion inflationniste de l'après-guerre | 1940-1950 |
| 6. Les années 50 | 1950-1959 |
| 7. Les années 60 | 1960-1969 |

1. Avant la Première Guerre mondiale - (1900-1913)

Pendant les vingt ans qui ont précédé la Première Guerre mondiale, l'agitation des travailleurs, les conflits du travail et la violence sont partout en Europe et sur le continent nord-américain. La rapidité de l'industrialisation et la croissance économique de plusieurs pays, dont le Canada, provoque des changements qui disloquent la société, élargissent le fossé entre les classes de revenus, accentuent la concentration des richesses et mettent à la mode un goût pour l'étalage voyant. En réaction, une vaste agitation sociale se développe tandis que prennent naissance des mouvements

radicaux et révolutionnaires et des idéologies qui prônent, et en maintes occasions appliquent, des programmes d'action violente.

Pour la première fois, le syndicalisme devient un mouvement de masse au sens exact du terme: travailleurs qualifiés et travailleurs spécialisés s'organisent en larges syndicats "de type industriel", à l'échelon national ou même international. Le travail organisé commence à exercer une influence sensible sur la politique. Des grèves d'une ampleur et d'une résonance jamais vues viennent se greffer à ce phénomène et, dans bien des cas, devant l'intransigeance des employeurs et des gouvernements, dégénèrent en violence.

Le Canada, pays très "ouvert" à certains égards et partie intégrante de l'économie occidentale, est durement touché. D'autant plus que pour lui la période 1890-1913, grâce à un concours de circonstances particulièrement favorables, est une période d'expansion économique sans précédent: l'immigration, la croissance démographique et les investissements atteignent des chiffres records tandis que font plus que doubler la production industrielle et l'emploi sous l'impulsion d'une migration massive vers les Prairies, de la mise en valeur de cette région et de la construction du nouveau chemin de fer transcontinental.

Mais cet essor économique, de par son type, favorise l'agitation et la multiplication des grèves. Dans un climat mondial d'inflation et, au Canada, d'explosion démographique, les salaires suivent malaisément les prix. Des mouvements considérables de population à l'intérieur du pays, assortis d'une immigration massive, tendent à provoquer une désorganisation sociale et des conflits ouvriers. Ces derniers, que ce soit entre employés et employeurs ou entre syndicats, sont portés à leur paroxysme par des tensions et des rivalités entre les divers groupes raciaux et ethniques,

notamment là où on utilise certains groupes d'immigrants et, au Québec et dans les Maritimes, les travailleurs ruraux en excédent comme, main-d'oeuvre bon marché ou comme briseurs de grève.

Pendant cette période, le travail organisé se développe rapidement et se transforme. Au tournant du siècle, il est solidement établi à l'échelle nationale, encore qu'il se heurte à une variété d'oppositions et de schismes régionaux. La formation modérée qui domine le mouvement, le Congrès des métiers et du travail du Canada, composée en grande partie de syndicats internationaux affiliés à la Fédération américaine du travail fait face toujours à des mouvements rivaux prônant diverses idéologies. Citons parmi eux: la Fédération canadienne du travail, nationaliste et antiaméricaine; les syndicats catholiques organisés sous l'égide de l'Eglise catholique au Québec en opposition aux syndicats "étrangers" et "laïcs" qui ont nom Congrès des métiers et du travail du Canada et Fédération canadienne du travail, et, en Colombie-Britannique, des associations radicales hostiles à la Fédération américaine du travail ayant leur origine aux Etats-Unis et dont les principales sont la Western Federation of Miners, la United Brotherhood of Railway Employees (Fraternité-unie des cheminots) et les Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.). Tous ces groupes d'opposition sont directement ou indirectement responsables d'une partie, supérieure à leur importance, des grèves enregistrées au Canada avant la guerre.

Au Canada comme aux Etats-Unis, les employeurs semblent avoir été hostiles aux syndicats. Ils exprimaient avec violence leur opposition aux syndicats "étrangers", "dominés par l'Amérique" et à leurs "agitateurs étrangers", notamment aux groupements affiliés à des organisations radicales dissidentes. Aussi la reconnaissance syndicale devient-elle la grande question

en litige d'un grand nombre, sinon de la plupart, des grèves de quelque envergure.

Dans les conflits, la politique des gouvernements de tous ordres semble favoriser davantage le patronat que le travail organisé, car la loi, telle qu'on l'interprète à l'époque, protège en priorité les biens de l'employeur et sa liberté d'engager des briseurs de grève et de poursuivre les opérations sans intervention extérieure, plutôt qu'elle ne se soucie des droits des travailleurs de s'organiser, de négocier collectivement avec les employeurs et de protéger leur emploi. A partir du début du siècle, le gouvernement fédéral procède à l'adoption de diverses mesures législatives dans une tentative de s'autoriser à intervenir dans un différend pour le régler. Au début, l'intervention n'a lieu que sur demande, mais elle devient plus tard obligatoire. Si les mesures ainsi adoptées imposent des restrictions à la liberté des travailleurs de recourir à la grève, au piquetage et au boycottage, elles n'obligent pas en contrepartie les employeurs à reconnaître les syndicats et à négocier avec eux, et protègent ces derniers bien peu, sinon pas du tout, contre les mesures d'agression ou de représailles des employeurs comme, par exemple, le renvoi de syndicalistes ou leur inscription sur une liste noire, l'engagement de briseurs de grève, etc.

Par rapport à sa population active, la Colombie-Britannique connaît à l'époque un nombre démesuré de grèves, et c'est elle qui subit l'arrêt de travail le plus important et le plus violent des vingt ans qui ont précédé la Première Guerre mondiale. On peut en donner plusieurs raisons. D'abord l'économie de la province était spécialisée à l'extrême dans des industries comme le bois, les mines, la pêche et la construction, secteurs où le rendement, le revenu et l'emploi sont aptes à subir des fluctuations saisonnières

et cycliques assez prononcées. Deuxièmement, l'embauchage très largement répandu, surtout pour briser les grèves, d'une main-d'oeuvre orientale très peu payée créait une atmosphère de ressentiment et d'hostilité. Enfin, le syndicalisme en Colombie-Britannique subissait très fortement l'influence de philosophies radicales militantes venues, avec les immigrants, de Grande-Bretagne et des Etats-Unis.

La situation par industrie

Dans le pays en général, c'est l'industrie du bâtiment qui enregistre un nombre démesuré de grèves, la plupart relativement petites et courtes. Pourtant des arrêts de travail touchant la totalité de cette branche ont lieu à un moment ou à un autre dans presque tous les grands centres métropolitains, à Toronto en 1903, Montréal en 1904, Winnipeg en 1906 et Vancouver en 1911. La fréquence des différends dans cette industrie semble avoir pour cause tout d'abord l'essor remarquable de la construction à une époque d'expansion sans précédent, associé à une concurrence impitoyable entre les entrepreneurs et à l'arrivée massive des travailleurs immigrants.

Les transports ont aussi plus que leur part de temps perdu en grèves et connaissent des conflits très violents. La grève des garde-lignes du Canadien Pacifique en 1901 touche 5000 travailleurs d'un bout à l'autre du pays. Trois autres grèves majeures frappent quelques années plus tard le même chemin de fer: en 1903 en Colombie-Britannique, en 1908 à Fort William (Ont.) et dans tout le pays, encore en 1908. Dans les deux premières, des rencontres armées entre la police de la compagnie et les grévistes, font des blessés et, dans un cas, un mort.

Deux grandes grèves des catégories ambulantes, l'une en 1905 et l'autre en 1910, immobilisent la totalité du Grand Tronc en Ontario et au Québec. La seconde notamment soulève des émeutes et le gouvernement envoie des troupes dans plusieurs villes pour maintenir l'ordre.

Parmi les autres confrontations violentes dans les transports, citons celles des débardeurs de Montréal et d'autres ports du Saint-Laurent en 1903, et trois grèves de conducteurs de tramway: à Toronto en 1902, Hamilton, 1906 et Winnipeg, 1906. Chacune provoque des émeutes et entraîne l'intervention de la milice ou des troupes régulières.

Comme nous l'avons déjà fait remarquer, pendant la période qui précède la Première Guerre mondiale, l'industrie connaît une expansion rapide. Mais ce n'est que dans la province de Québec que l'on enregistre une bataille d'envergure. De plus, contrairement à l'habitude, cette bataille se livre surtout dans les industries "légères" dans lesquelles la province se spécialise. La position dominante de la minorité anglophone dans la propriété et le contrôle de l'industrie et des finances favorise à cette époque, comme maintenant, les tensions et les conflits. Une vague de grèves et une campagne ambitieuse d'organisation chez les travailleurs du textile dans le Québec aboutit à la fermeture virtuelle de la totalité de cette branche. Le conflit n'a pu se régler que grâce à la création par le Parlement d'une Commission royale spéciale chargée d'arbitrer le différend.

L'industrie de la chaussure, centralisée dans la ville de Québec, connaît, elle, trois arrêts de travail pendant cette période. Le premier en 1900, a marqué le début de la campagne menée par l'Eglise catholique pour organiser des syndicats catholiques francophones distincts dans la Province.

Un autre événement digne d'être mentionné au Québec est la grève de plusieurs centaines de travailleurs des scieries de Buckingham en 1906. Cette grève cause un affrontement armé entre les grévistes et la police de la société, au cours duquel plusieurs personnes des deux camps sont tuées ou blessées. Et Ottawa doit dépêcher la milice et des forces régulières pour restaurer l'ordre.

Charbonnages

Les conflits extrêmement violents et de grande envergure qui éclatent à cette époque dans les charbonnages au Canada éclipsent les manifestations dont nous venons de parler. Ils se concentrent surtout dans trois zones du pays: la Nouvelle-Ecosse, particulièrement l'île du Cap-Breton, l'île de Vancouver (C.-B.), aux environs de Nanaimo et de Ladysmith et la région minière du Sud-Ouest de l'Alberta et de l'Est de la Colombie-Britannique. Dans cette seule industrie, qui employait en tout environ 25,000 travailleurs, soit moins de 2 p. 100 de toute la main-d'oeuvre non agricole du Canada, se produisent 5 p. 100 de toutes les grèves, comprenant 24 p. 100 de tous les travailleurs impliqués dans les grèves et 42 p. 100 de tout le temps perdu en grève, pour la période allant de 1900 à 1913 inclus.

Dans les Maritimes, une série de débrayages spontanés relativement peu importants dans les charbonnages atteint son comble en 1909 et dégénère en un conflit qui frappe toute l'industrie et dure presque deux ans. Il est né d'un violent différend intersyndical et du refus du principal employeur, La Compagnie Dosco, de reconnaître le syndicat des Mineurs-unis d'Amérique (MUA) (United Mine Workers of America) auquel la majorité des mineurs appartenait, et négocier avec lui. Pendant le conflit, le gouvernement envoie des centaines de soldats à Glace Bay et dans d'autres centres.

Le même type de conflit fait son apparition dans les charbonnages de l'île de Vancouver. De nombreux petits débrayages spontanés et assez brefs entraînent de graves heurts, chaque fois causés par le refus des principales sociétés d'accepter de négocier collectivement avec leurs employés. En 1903, une grève dirigée par la Western Federation of Miners (W.F.M.) et qui se déroule en même temps que la très longue et violente grève des cheminots contre la C.P., faite par un syndicat allié sous des auspices radicaux, conduit à la création d'une Commission royale d'enquête spéciale, car le gouvernement soupçonne un "complot socialiste". En 1912, un conflit beaucoup plus sérieux qui dure presque deux ans et qui est dirigé par les Mineurs-unis d'Amérique qui ont succédé à la W.F.M., touche, à son point culminant, quelque 7000 travailleurs. Le succès des employeurs dans leur effort pour engager des briseurs de grève orientaux ou immigrants en très grand nombre provoque une lutte violente au cours de laquelle il y a des blessés graves, des dégâts matériels importants, l'intervention des forces armées et des centaines d'arrestations. Ce sont finalement les MUA (U.M.W.) qui mettent fin au conflit après plus de deux ans et après avoir dépensé plus d'un million de dollars.

La région charbonnière du Sud-Est de la Colombie-Britannique et du Sud-Ouest de l'Alberta est aussi à cette époque le théâtre de nombreuses grèves, longues et coûteuses. Un de leurs effets est l'adoption en 1907 par le parlement fédéral d'une loi sur les enquêtes visant les différends du travail, qui établit l'intervention obligatoire et interdit toute grève et tout lock-out tant que la commission d'enquête tripartite n'a pas terminé ses auditions et recommandé des modalités de règlement.

Les seules autres grèves sérieuses en Colombie-Britannique dans la période d'avant-guerre, et qui donnent lieu à des actes de violence et à l'intervention des forces armées, sont une série d'arrêts de travail dans les pêcheries et dans la construction de chemins de fer. Certaines grandes grèves de pêcheurs s'aggravent de très violents conflits entre principaux groupes ethniques: blancs, Indiens et Japonais.

En 1913-1914, une crise économique et le chômage amènent une forte diminution du nombre d'adhérents aux syndicats et du nombre de grèves au Canada.

2. Le radicalisme et la réaction—La Première Guerre mondiale et la transition d'après-guerre, 1914-1920

Le syndicalisme et les conflits du travail passent par un même cycle d'augmentation intense et de déclin brutal pendant la Première Guerre mondiale et les deux années qui suivent. Les charbonnages continuent d'être l'industrie la plus touchée par les grèves bien que de façon moins sérieuse qu'auparavant. Plus importants dans un sens sont l'implantation des syndicats et la participation des salariés aux grèves dans un grand nombre d'industries et de professions non organisées jusque-là. L'événement le plus spectaculaire et le plus important reste cependant la grève générale de Winnipeg en 1919 et ses répercussions dans tout le pays.

Parmi les grands facteurs de l'agitation croissante des dernières années de la guerre et des quelques années subséquentes, on trouve une montée inflationniste des prix, que suivent difficilement les salaires dans de nombreuses industries. Cette montée des prix, le soupçon qui se répand que certains ont tiré des profits malhonnêtes de la guerre et l'agitation sociale croissante amènent le gouvernement fédéral à intervenir davantage dans des

domaines généralement réservés à la compétence provinciale. On trouve aussi comme facteurs possibles de l'agitation, des émeutes et des conflits, l'augmentation du pouvoir fédéral et les lois d'urgence adoptées au cours de la guerre et qui, de l'avis d'une large minorité de syndicats, apportent trop de restrictions.

La situation a pour effet de tendre à l'extrême et finalement de rompre les relations entre les syndicats à tendance radicale des quatre provinces de l'Ouest et l'organisation mère, le Congrès des métiers et du travail du Canada (CMTC). Les dissidents de l'Ouest, qui ont vu certaines de leurs résolutions refusées de façon répétée aux congrès du CMTC, tiennent en mars 1919, à Calgary, de concert avec un certain nombre de syndicats non affiliés, une conférence des travailleurs de l'Ouest d'où naît le "One Big Union" (O.B.U.) formé en opposition au CMTC. L'O.B.U. prône un syndicalisme révolutionnaire semblable en certains points à celui des I.W.W. et lance un programme destiné à organiser les travailleurs par industries plutôt que par professions.

La conférence de Calgary dure encore quand la grève générale de Winnipeg éclate. Celle-ci débute par un débrayage chez les métallurgistes de la ville, à l'appui de leurs demandes d'augmentation de salaires et en signe de protestation contre le refus des employeurs de reconnaître le Metal Trades Council comme "unité de négociation" pour ses syndicats affiliés et de négocier avec lui. Le Conseil des métiers et du travail de Winnipeg appuie aussitôt les revendications des grévistes et, après un vote qui obtient une majorité écrasante, environ 30,000 travailleurs déclenchent une grève générale.

Le moment où éclate cette grève—pendant la conférence des travailleurs de l'Ouest—et le fait que plusieurs de ses dirigeants ont adhéré à l'O.B.U.

qui vient de se former, lui donnent l'aspect d'un complot révolutionnaire. Et c'est ainsi que la voient le gouvernement fédéral et presque tous les hommes d'affaires et les employeurs de Winnipeg, qui prennent aussitôt des mesures sévères pour la réprimer. Un comité de citoyens, composé d'hommes d'affaires et d'employeurs, se forme pour aider à maintenir "l'ordre public". A tous les niveaux, les gouvernements mettent en demeure leurs employés de reprendre le travail sous peine de renvoi. Le gouvernement fédéral dirige sur la ville des détachements de la Gendarmerie royale du Nord-Ouest (GRNO) et du personnel militaire. De nombreux dirigeants de la grève sont arrêtés et plusieurs qui étaient nés à l'étranger, y compris des sujets britanniques, sont expulsés. Plus tard sept dirigeants de grève seront accusés d'avoir fomenté un complot révolutionnaire et recevront des condamnations allant de six mois à deux ans d'emprisonnement.

La grève générale atteint son point culminant le 21 juin. Ce jour-là un défilé monstre organisé par les anciens combattants pour protester contre les arrestations, aboutit à la lecture par le maire de Winnipeg de la loi sur l'émeute et à trois charges par un détachement de la GRNO, revolver au poing, qui font trente blessés et un mort. Quelques jours plus tard le Comité central de grève faisait cesser le débrayage.

La grève générale de Winnipeg eut pour effet de susciter une série de débrayages dans diverses villes du pays, de Sydney (N.-E.) à Prince Rupert (C.-B.). La plupart ne durèrent pas, mais l'arrêt le plus long et le plus grave, celui de Vancouver, se prolongea presque un mois.

L'année suivante, 1920, le nombre record de grèves de l'année 1919 est presque atteint, 310 contre 322. Il s'agit pour la plupart de conflits moins graves et moins longs, si bien que le nombre de travailleurs impliqués et de jours-hommes perdus est de beaucoup inférieur.

Entre-temps le One Big Union connaît une brève période d'essor rapide, car de nombreux affiliés du CMTC abandonnent celui-ci pour adhérer à la nouvelle association dissidente. Mais l'opposition des gouvernements, des employeurs et des syndicats internationaux, associée à des conflits internes et à l'apparition de factions, ne tarde pas à entraîner sa désintégration et finalement sa disparition.

3. Inertie des années vingt: 1920-1929

A l'inverse des années précédentes, au cours de la décennie généralement prospère des années 20, l'envergure et la force du syndicalisme connaissent au Canada comme aux Etats-Unis un sérieux déclin qui se traduit par une baisse très nette du nombre de grèves.

Ce déclin a plusieurs raisons. Au Canada, la vague de grèves sans précédent de 1919-1920, suivie par la très grave dépression et le chômage de 1920-1921 ont brisé les ressorts du syndicalisme. Aux Etats-Unis, les principales associations d'employeurs mènent contre les syndicats une campagne bien financée et bien coordonnée en faveur de l'atelier ouvert, et cela n'est pas sans influencer l'attitude des employeurs canadiens. Les deux pays connaissent un exode rural massif, doublé au Canada d'une immigration massive, qui accentue la concurrence pour les emplois. Parallèlement, l'expansion la plus forte du rendement et de l'emploi dans les deux pays au cours des années 1920 se fait dans des industries nouvelles et sans organisation ouvrière ou bien dans des industries qui ont résisté avec succès à

une implantation réelle des syndicats. Citons, parmi les plus importantes, les automobiles, les produits électriques, la sidérurgie, l'outillage lourd, les produits chimiques, l'extraction des métaux non ferreux et les fonderies, l'exploitation des forêts et les scieries ainsi qu'une gamme très large d'emplois de bureau, la vente et les services. Il y a enfin l'organisation archaïque et inefficace des principaux syndicats, la FAT aux Etats-Unis et son homologue le CMTC au Canada. Dominés par des dirigeants partisans du syndicalisme traditionnel par métier et d'une idéologie dépassée, ils ne se montrent ni capables ni désireux d'organiser des syndicats efficaces dans les secteurs qui se développent le plus rapidement et qui sont les plus dynamiques de l'économie.

La seule exception, semble-t-il, à ce tableau serait le cas des charbonnages qui connaissent une vague sans précédent de grèves coûteuses et très longues pendant les années 1920. A lui seul, ce secteur est responsable de plus de la moitié du temps perdu pour cause de grève au Canada pendant la décennie. Dans les Maritimes, les mineurs participent à trois grandes grèves qui touchent tout le secteur: en 1923 (alors que la sidérurgie, à Sydney (N.-E.) est aussi en grève) en 1924 et en 1925. De même, dans les mines de l'Ouest de l'Alberta et du Sud-Est de la Colombie-Britannique, se produisent en 1920, 1922 et 1924 des fermetures d'usines à l'échelle de l'industrie. Dans les deux régions la plupart des conflits découlent des efforts des Mineurs-unis d'Amérique pour résister aux réductions de salaire que les exploitants imposent devant la montée de la concurrence non syndicale et des excédents de charbon. Les efforts du syndicat seront vains et le syndicat lui-même disparaîtra de l'industrie pendant plusieurs années. Des associations d'obédience communiste lui succéderont, mais à une plus petite échelle.

Les seules autres grèves comparables par leur envergure, leur durée et leur violence à celles des charbonnages sont celles des débardeurs de Vancouver en 1923, des travailleurs de la chaussure à Québec en 1925 et 1926, des travailleurs du vêtement à Montréal en 1926-1927. Là aussi, tous les syndicats subissent de sérieuses défaites.

4. 1930-1939: de "sales années"

Pour les besoins de l'analyse, nous diviserons la décennie des années 30 en deux périodes distinctes: 1930-1935 et 1935-1939.

Contrairement à l'habitude, il y a plus de grèves au Canada pendant la grande crise économique du début de cette décennie que dans la période relativement prospère des années 20. La plupart sont dirigées par de nouveaux syndicats organisés par des mouvements affiliés au parti communiste en réaction contre les centrales établies, la FAT et le CMTC. Voici les secteurs les plus touchés: l'exploitation forestière et la scierie, les charbonnages et l'extraction des métaux; les textiles et le vêtement, les compagnies de navigation et, en Colombie-Britannique, le déchargement des navires et la pêche. La plupart des grèves de cette période dégénèrent en violence et sont l'occasion d'interventions par la police.

Parmi les industries touchées, les charbonnages continuent à avoir plus que leur part des arrêts de travail, mais il s'agit en majorité de manifestations circonscrites et brèves. La plus violente et la plus longue du début des années 30 est celle des débardeurs du port de Vancouver et d'autres ports de la Colombie-Britannique à partir du mois de juin jusqu'au mois de décembre 1935.

Où le malaise dans le monde du travail et la répression gouvernementale se manifestent le plus spectaculairement, c'est dans les nombreuses démonstrations et émeutes qu'organisent les chômeurs et les assistés sous la direction des communistes. La "marche sur Ottawa" et l'émeute de Régina de 1935 en sont les exemples les plus frappants.

En 1932, le gouvernement fédéral crée un réseau de camps de travail pour les chômeurs célibataires et en confie l'administration au ministère de la Défense nationale. Dans ces camps, les hommes sont employés à la construction de divers ouvrages publics et d'installations militaires et reçoivent \$0.20 par jour, plus la pension et la nourriture ainsi que des soins médicaux gratuits. Cette piètre rémunération, l'inconfort général et surtout l'administration militaire attirent à l'entreprise des critiques acerbes et, à l'occasion, provoquent des protestations violentes.

En avril 1935, en Colombie-Britannique, plusieurs milliers de ces hommes, groupés dans le Syndicat de travailleurs des camps d'assistance, d'inspiration communiste, quittent les camps dans une sorte de grève pour obtenir des salaires plus élevés et d'autres améliorations, et convergent sur Vancouver. Ils y restent plusieurs semaines au cours desquelles ils participent à de nombreuses manifestations, à des émeutes et à des heurts avec la police. Le 3 juin, un millier d'entre eux montent à bord de trains de marchandises avec l'intention de trouver de nouvelles recrues en route et de se rendre à Ottawa pour y tenir des manifestations de masse. Les autorités fédérales donnent à la Gendarmerie royale l'ordre d'arrêter "cette marche" à Régina. A une réunion monstre, organisée au passage dans cette ville et qui groupe plusieurs centaines de grévistes et environ 4,000 spectateurs et sympathisants, un détachement important de la GRC et des policiers

municipaux tentent d'arrêter les dirigeants de la grève, ce qui provoque une émeute de plusieurs heures où les forces de l'ordre se servent de gaz lacrimogène, de fusils et de matraques et les manifestants, de pierres. A la fin de l'émeute, un détective de la ville est mort, une douzaine d'agents de police et plus d'une centaine de civils sont blessés et il y a plus de cent trente arrestations. Vint-quatre personnes sont traduites en justice et neuf reçoivent des condamnations allant jusqu'à 14 mois de prison pour "émeute, blessures et voies de faits".

Dans la deuxième partie des années 30, des changements marqués se produisent dans la forme et la localisation des grèves et des autres manifestations du malaise du travail au Canada. Les manifestations interviennent surtout dans les industries de transformation et ne se concentrent plus comme auparavant dans les industries primaires et certains secteurs des transports. Par voie de conséquence, l'Ontario et le Québec, comme provinces manufacturières, deviennent le lieu d'élection des conflits tandis que ceux-ci déclinent en Colombie-Britannique où domine l'industrie primaire.

Ce déplacement de l'action syndicale paraît au Canada être l'effet d'événements majeurs survenant aux Etats-Unis. La Loi nationale sur les relations de travail (ou Loi Wagner) de 1935 vient d'apporter dans ce pays une nouvelle protection juridique et un encouragement au syndicalisme et à la négociation collective. Elle est suivie de près par la constitution du Comité pour l'organisation de l'industrie (COI), dont l'action prépare le terrain à une renaissance et à une montée spectaculaire du syndicalisme industriel militant. En outre, de 1935 à 1937, un redressement économique très rapide crée un milieu favorable au développement du syndicalisme. Entre-temps le parti communiste abandonne son programme de "syndicalisme

révolutionnaire", et reprend une politique de "noyautage" des organisations nouvelles ou déjà établies.

Les campagnes d'organisation menées vigoureusement par le COI aux Etats-Unis contre une résistance vive de la part des employeurs conduisent à plusieurs grandes confrontations, spectaculaires et violentes, dans des industries comme les charbonnages, les textiles, l'emballage de la viande, les automobiles, la sidérurgie et le caoutchouc, si bien qu'en 1937 un nouveau record est établi pour le nombre des grèves et le nombre des jours perdus.

Ces événements aux Etats-Unis ne manquent pas de se répercuter fortement au Canada. L'Ontario et le Québec deviennent les principaux centres d'agitation, peut-être parce que ces provinces sont limitrophes et que leur activité industrielle fait pendant à celle des principaux "centres d'action" aux Etats-Unis, le Nord-Est et le "middle-west" industriels. Les affiliés du COI qui viennent de se constituer se montrent particulièrement actifs en Ontario.

Au Canada pendant cette période, la grève industrielle la plus importante, par ses résonnances profondes, est celle des 4,000 travailleurs de l'usine de la General Motors, à Oshawa (Ontario), en avril 1937.

Le débrayage a pour cause le litige concernant le reconnaissance de la section locale de l'Union internationale des travailleurs de l'automobile d'Amérique, qui vient de se former. La situation ne manque pas de piquant. La filiale canadienne d'une société américaine refuse de traiter avec le comité de négociation de la section locale canadienne d'un syndicat américain "international", sous prétexte que ce comité compte dans ses rangs un "représentant international" de Détroit.

Et cette situation devient franchement ridicule quand le premier ministre de l'Ontario, M. Mitchell Hepburn, se porte au secours de la société. Il qualifie la grève de "complot d'agitateurs étrangers et des communistes" pour dominer les industries et les mines de l'Ontario et "écraser nos exportations". Soutenu par les principaux journaux et intérêts commerciaux de la province, M. Hepburn mobilise une force considérable de la Gendarmerie royale et de volontaires armés pour régler ce qu'il appelle "la crise". La grève elle-même se déroule dans le calme et prend fin au bout de quinze jours: le syndicat obtient des augmentations de traitement et des réductions d'horaire, mais non la reconnaissance.

L'attitude de M. Hepburn dans cette affaire crée cependant des dissensions profondes tant dans le parti libéral que dans le parti conservateur en Ontario, ainsi qu'un certain nombre de conflits entre le gouvernement provincial et le gouvernement fédéral, mais sa lutte contre la COI bénéficie d'un large appui public et, étant devenu la grande question de la campagne électorale, lui procure à la fin de 1937 une victoire écrasante.

Dans cette deuxième partie des années 30, le Québec est le théâtre de quelques-unes des grèves les plus longues et les plus violentes de l'époque. Les privations dues aux réductions de salaires et au chômage pendant la dépression des années 30 ont surtout touché la majorité francophone des salariés, alors que la minorité anglophone composée de cadres et d'agents de maîtrise, de membres des professions libérales et de techniciens, y échappa en partie. Les différences ethniques, religieuses et linguistiques, exacerbent donc la lutte des classes et les tensions, suscitant chez les syndicats affiliés au CTCC qui jusque-là s'est montré discipliné et conciliant, une force et un fanatisme nouveaux ainsi qu'une tendance à la

violence. Dans la région de Montréal, en 1937, une grève d'environ 9,000 travailleurs du textile finit par paralyser cette industrie entière lorsqu'elle atteint les filatures de Saint-Grégoire de Montmorency, Sherbrooke, Magog, Drummondville et Valleyfield. Les débrayages s'accompagnent d'incidents épars (dommages aux biens, voies de fait sur la personne des employeurs, confrontations avec la police) que grossissent à l'envi les journaux. Des incidents identiques ont lieu pendant la grève des chantiers navals et celle des métallurgistes, à Sorel et à Québec en 1937-1938. Ces grèves sont le théâtre d'une intimidation encore plus prolongée et plus intense, de violence et de dégâts matériels beaucoup plus graves que dans les textiles et sont plus difficiles à régler.

L'Eglise catholique s'est sentie alors obligée de résister à la vague montante des conflits ethniques ou de classe. Plusieurs grèves sont donc réglées par des négociations officieuses entre les représentants de l'Eglise, les employeurs et le gouvernement provincial. Cette politique fait naître chez les travailleurs canadiens-français une forte dose d'anticléricalisme latent, et affaiblit pour plusieurs années le syndicalisme catholique au Québec.

En Colombie-Britannique à la fin des années 30, le principal événement est une deuxième grande grève des travailleurs des camps d'assistance en 1938, sous la conduite des communistes. Avec des tactiques semblables à celles qu'ils avaient utilisées à Vancouver en 1935, les grévistes occupent plusieurs édifices publics, et y compris le bureau de poste de Vancouver. Un détachement de la Gendarmerie royale livre un assaut en règle pour les déloger, avec l'aide de gaz lacrimogène, de matraques et de fouets. Bilan définitif: trente-cinq blessés, dont cinq policiers, vingt-deux arrestations et des dégâts se chiffrant à des dizaines de milliers de dollars.

Général

La récession de 1938, courte mais sérieuse, et accompagnée d'une augmentation massive du chômage, le rétablissement partiel de 1939 et l'expulsion hors du Congrès des métiers et du travail du Canada des syndicats affiliés au COI arrêtent momentanément l'expansion de l'organisation syndicale, et diminuent considérablement la fréquence des grèves au pays.

5. Les années de combat: 1940-1950

Comme pour les années 1930, il est commode de diviser, pour les besoins de l'analyse, les années 1940 en deux périodes distinctes: les années de guerre, 1940-1946 et les d'après-guerre, 1946-1950. Cette décennie constitue une période à part dans l'histoire des conflits du travail parce que les relations du travail au Canada à cette époque subissent le contrecoup de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale et des divers déséquilibres qui suivent.

Au strict point de vue du syndicalisme et des conflits du travail, on pourrait considérer la Deuxième Guerre mondiale et les années qui suivent immédiatement, 1946 et 1947, comme la continuation ou même l'accélération d'un mouvement qui est fermement engagé au cours de la décennie précédente, et qui se présente comme une série montante de "vagues" ou de "crises", de difficultés d'organisation et de conflits, chaque nouvelle poussée dépassant la précédente, notamment en 1934-1935, 1937 et 1943, pour atteindre un record absolu lors de la vague sans précédent de fermetures d'entreprises de 1946-1947. Plusieurs grèves particulièrement longues et importantes frappent les principales sociétés et industries du pays. Elles offrent une certaine ressemblance avec les vagues précédentes, qui ont débuté à la fin des années 1890 pour culminer en 1919-1920. Au milieu des années 1940, pourtant, la

violence et l'illégalité, le recours à la police et à l'armée qui ont caractérisé les conflits des décennies précédentes sont relativement négligeables.

Au cours de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, les conditions favorisent l'essor des syndicats. Les adhésions augmentent rapidement, ainsi que les grèves, dont le nombre et celui des grévistes atteignent de nouveaux chiffres records. La plupart sont de courte durée et ont pour objet principal la reconnaissance des syndicats, à laquelle s'oppose fortement la presque totalité des employeurs.

Cette situation entraîne une crise grave; en effet, contrairement à celles des années d'avant-guerre, la très grande majorité des grèves du début des années 1940, et toutes les grandes grèves, qui touchent jusqu'à 15,000 ouvriers, se produisent dans les industries lourdes, jugées vitales pour l'effort de guerre. Citons la sidérurgie, les véhicules automobiles, les avions, les armes, et autres catégories d'outillage et de matériel, ainsi que l'extraction du charbon. Plusieurs grèves se règlent à des conditions qui vont à l'encontre des mesures d'urgence prises en temps de guerre et régissant le blocage des salaires et des emplois.

Les charbonnages continuent à susciter plus que leur part de l'agitation syndicale. En 1941 et 1943, les grèves atteignent un nombre record, tout en étant pour la plupart relativement petites et brèves. Les charbonnages, particulièrement en Nouvelle-Ecosse, connaissent aussi des "ralentissements" et des taux d'absentéisme très élevés ainsi que des pénuries de main-d'oeuvre dues à l'exode massif des jeunes travailleurs de l'industrie. Craignant de graves pénuries de charbon, le gouvernement fédéral juge nécessaire de prendre des mesures d'urgence particulièrement énergiques.

On peut attribuer le nombre remarquablement élevé des grèves de toutes sortes qui éclatent au Canada au début de la guerre à la législation du travail démodée, et à ses dispositions concernant la reconnaissance syndicale, les négociations collectives et le règlement des conflits. Au début de 1944, un décret du Conseil qui endosse les grands principes de la Loi Wagner américaine et de la Loi de 1907 sur les enquêtes visant les différends du travail redresse temporairement ce déséquilibre. A partir de ce moment, et jusqu'à la fin de la guerre, les conflits ouverts sont relativement peu importants.

Mais comme nous l'avons déjà fait remarquer, il se produit ensuite une nouvelle série de grèves qui culmine en 1946-1947. On peut attribuer cette situation, comme celle qui s'est présentée environ trente ans plus tôt, à divers déséquilibres, à des tensions et à des conflits nés des bouleversements d'après-guerre, et à la réaction face au contrôle sévère des salaires et des prix et aux autres règlements adoptés pendant la guerre. Les grèves les plus longues et les plus importantes, qui mettent en cause plus de 5,000 travailleurs chacune et font perdre plus de 100,000 jours-hommes, frappent les industries du bois (C.-B.), de l'extraction du charbon et des métaux, de l'automobile, de la sidérurgie, du caoutchouc, des appareils électriques, des textiles et des viandes. Dans la plupart des cas, les ouvriers réclament une augmentation appréciable des salaires et, contrairement aux années précédentes, il n'y a d'émeutes, d'actes illégaux et d'usage des forces de police sur une grande échelle que dans un ou deux cas (comme dans la longue grève des travailleurs de l'automobile à Windsor et dans celle des marins des Grands Lacs).

A la fin des années 1940, le nombre et les effets des grèves diminuent nettement, malgré la très forte inflation consécutive à la guerre. Les

quelques grèves longues ou importantes déclenchées de 1947 à 1950 le sont dans les industries où l'amélioration des salaires et des horaires de travail accuse un grand retard sur les secteurs qui ont "donné le ton" en 1946 et au début de 1947. Citons notamment les grèves du textile et de la chaussure à la fin de 1947, et celle de l'amiante en 1949, toutes au Québec; et surtout, en 1950, la grève des cheminots qui s'étend à tout le pays et frappe les deux lignes transcontinentales, pour la première fois dans l'histoire du Canada.

La grève des travailleurs de l'amiante, au Québec, est le conflit de cette période qui reçoit le plus de publicité. Elle marque un tournant critique de l'évolution du syndicalisme catholique, peut-être même de l'histoire sociale du Québec. Ce combat long et acharné présente le spectacle insolite de l'Eglise catholique soutenant ouvertement le syndicat contre les employeurs et le gouvernement provincial, après que le ministre du Travail du Québec eut officiellement déclaré la grève illégale, et que la Commission des relations ouvrières eut révoqué l'accréditation du syndicat.

6. 1951-1959: Années prodigieuses mais tourmentées

A première vue, au Canada comme aux Etats-Unis, cette période présente des points communs avec les années 1920. La décennie est en général prospère, marquée au Canada par de très forts investissements de capitaux étrangers (surtout américains) et une expansion industrielle rapide. De 1957 à 1961, la croissance se ralentit et il y a beaucoup de chômage.

Comme en 1920, le climat général, politique et social, entretient un conservatisme complaisant, parfois même actif, et le syndicalisme demeure dans un état de stagnation relative, de sorte qu'on assiste à une régression de l'agitation sociale et des conflits du travail. Après 1956, le nombre

des adhérents des syndicats exprimé en pourcentage de la population active totale diminue, alors que par rapport à l'augmentation des possibilités d'emploi et des adhésions syndicales enregistrées immédiatement après la guerre, les pertes totales dues aux grèves tombent au plus bas niveau depuis 1920.

Un certain nombre d'éléments peuvent expliquer cette situation. Comme dans les années 20, il semble y avoir un désir généralisé de paix et de sécurité après les troubles et les conflits de la précédente décennie. Par suite de la faible natalité de la dépression, une forte part de la population active appartient aux groupes d'âge moyen ou supérieur et, après les privations et les incertitudes des années de la dépression et de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, ceux qui font partie de ces groupes d'âge recherchent surtout la sécurité et l'abondance. De plus, au début de cette période, des particuliers et des groupes importants, chez les employeurs, préconisent plus que précédemment une attitude conciliante, orientée vers les "relations humaines", face aux problèmes du travail et aux relations du travail, qui contraste avec celle très activement antisyndicale des années précédentes.

Outre la faible importance des grèves pendant cette période, on ne remarque ni les "cycles" ni les "vagues" prononcés de conflits qui ont caractérisé les décennies précédentes. Seule la Colombie-Britannique connaît un cycle marqué. En 1952, et encore de 1957 à 1959, des fermetures d'usines y paralysent toute l'industrie du bois et de la construction (et dans la dernière période, celle du papier), et contribuent pour beaucoup au total du temps perdu en grèves dans l'ensemble du Canada au cours de cette période. On peut attribuer ces conflits au développement économique singulièrement rapide mais irrégulier qui est alors celui de la Colombie-Britannique.

Les conflits de ces années sont relativement peu violents. Signalons pourtant quelques exceptions qui font les manchettes, comme les grèves de l'extraction du cuivre ou des fonderies de Murdochville, au Québec, en 1957, la grève des bûcherons et des coupeurs de bois à pâte à Terre-Neuve en 1959, et celle des conducteurs de camions en Ontario la même année. A la fin de la décennie, les grèves deviennent sensiblement plus fréquentes, ce qui est imputable, du moins en partie, à la nouvelle attitude plus "dure" des employeurs dans plusieurs industries à la suite du ralentissement de l'économie et de l'augmentation du chômage après 1957.

Ce "tableau" des grèves qui se dessine dans les années 1950 annonce la tendance générale de la décennie suivante: (i) forte diminution des grèves dans les charbonnages, secteur très turbulent depuis le tournant du siècle; (ii) concentration accrue des arrêts de travail dans des industries qui se sont organisées à la fin des années 30 et ont connu une expansion rapide pendant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale; cela est particulièrement vrai dans des domaines comme la construction des automobiles, l'acier, l'extraction des métaux non ferreux et la fonderie, le textile et, en Colombie-Britannique, la production du bois; (iii) la résurgence du groupe des métiers du bâtiment comme l'un des principaux groupes qui "donnent le ton" et "lancent les grèves", rôles qu'ils avaient cessé de jouer avant la Première Guerre mondiale; sous l'impulsion d'une expansion rapide de l'emploi à la suite des très forts investissements des années 1950, particulièrement dans le logement et dans les nouveaux grands projets d'aménagement industriel et de mise en valeur des ressources, les syndicats des métiers du bâtiment, avec à leur tête de nouveaux dirigeants plus jeunes et plus dynamiques, voient leurs rangs, leurs force, leur ardeur militante croître rapidement; ces changements sont particulièrement manifestes dans les grandes zones urbaines de Montréal,

Toronto et Vancouver; (iv) dans la fonction publique, et dans les services publics enfin, on enregistre un mouvement croissant d'agitation et de grèves chez les travailleurs; ces groupes passent généralement pour être peu militants, de sorte qu'on peut attribuer en grande partie cette situation à l'intervention croissante des gouvernements à tous les niveaux dans les conflits du travail et aux procédures de règlement des grèves dans les autres industries sous l'influence de la législation des relations du travail d'après-guerre. La responsabilité supposée du gouvernement dans l'augmentation des salaires et les autres avantages obtenus dans le "secteur privé" et leur "valeur d'exemple" ont sensibilisé fortement et de plus en plus les ouvriers et les syndicats des secteurs public et para-public.

7. 1960-1966: Expansion et détérioration

Dans la décennie de 1960, le climat des relations du travail et des conflits de travail subit de profonds changements. Pendant la grave période de récession et de chômage de 1960-1961, il n'y a presque pas de grèves, mais ensuite elles reprennent de l'ampleur pour culminer de nouveau en 1966, à un point tel que dans les milieux gouvernementaux, on parle d'une "crise" des relations du travail. Le Canada connaît cette année-là un nombre record de grèves et de grévistes, qui dépasse de loin tous ceux des années précédentes (quoique, comparé à la population active beaucoup plus nombreuse et au plus grand nombre de travailleurs syndiqués, le pourcentage du temps perdu en grèves et celui de la participation à celles-ci sont inférieures à ceux de 1919 et 1946, années qui ont établi les records précédents).

Contrairement aux années antérieures, la vague de grèves des années 60 suit une courbe cyclique très marquée, la fréquence et l'importance des conflits augmentant proportionnellement au produit national brut, qui croît

lui-même rapidement, et à l'inflation montante. Les grèves sont très fortement concentrées dans l'Ontario et le Québec, alors que la fréquence des conflits en Colombie-Britannique diminue considérablement.

Les grèves les plus importantes, qui font perdre le plus de temps, comme dans les années 1950, sont concentrées dans les industries lourdes (automobile, outillage agricole, acier brut, métaux non ferreux et fonderie); dans les industries de la construction (notamment dans les zones urbaines de Montréal et de Toronto); dans les transports (particulièrement chez les conducteurs de camion, les débardeurs, les marins des Grands Lacs, et les chemins de fer de tout le Canada); et, phénomène relativement nouveau, dans beaucoup d'emplois de bureau, professions libérales, techniques et fonction publique, particulièrement dans la province de Québec.

L'essor fantastique de la construction, dû aux capitaux énormes investis au milieu de la décennie, est à l'origine de ces cycles prononcés. Le phénomène est particulièrement marqué dans la région de Montréal, au moment de la préparation de l'Expo 67 et d'autres grands projets de transport ou d'organisation des structures commerciales et financières. La pénurie de main-d'oeuvre, les grèves et les très fortes augmentations de salaires dans l'industrie du bâtiment soulèvent des revendications et parfois des grèves dans d'autres industries locales, surtout à Montréal, chez les débardeurs et dans plusieurs domaines de la fonction publique et, en Ontario, chez les conducteurs de camions et les travailleurs des industries lourdes. La large publicité faite aux grèves et l'importance des gains dans ce domaine créent au cours de l'été 1966 des tensions qui atteignent leur plus haut point dans la deuxième grande grève de l'histoire du Canada qui frappe les deux principales sociétés de chemins de fer transcontinentaux, le CP et le CN.

Un certain nombre de faits qui entourent la plupart des grandes grèves, ainsi que plusieurs moins graves, créent dans les relations du travail au Canada, un climat de turbulence qui rappelle à certains égards une autre époque. Citons: (i) un nombre élevé et croissant de grèves "sauvages", illégales selon la lettre, dont certains des plus grands débrayages (comme dans l'acier brut et l'extraction et la fonderie du nickel, en Ontario, et les postes, dans tout le Canada); (ii) le rejet par la masse des travailleurs des conventions auxquelles les dirigeants syndicaux ou les comités de négociation étaient arrivés avec les employeurs; (iii) la fréquence relativement élevée du "maraudage" entre syndicats, et des désertions par les syndicats locaux des associations établies; (iv) des tensions et des conflits entre le Congrès du travail du Canada et certaines de ses fédérations provinciales affiliées, et également, entre celles-ci et certains syndicats affiliés de métiers et d'industries et une rivalité aiguë entre le Congrès du travail du Canada (CTC) et la Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN) à prédominance francophone et établie au Québec; (v) le mépris ouvert de la loi professé par plusieurs dirigeants syndicaux éminents ainsi que par de nombreux syndicalistes de la masse, particulièrement en ce qui concerne l'usage des injonctions des tribunaux dans les différends ouvriers; et (vi) une violence croissante dans les grèves (qui souvent se traduit par des blessures, des dégâts matériels et parfois même par des morts) accompagnée de l'intervention de la police, de répression légale et de centaines d'arrestations et de condamnations.

Certains de ces incidents, et parfois même tous, caractérisent des conflits de grande envergure qui font les manchettes, comme ceux des marins des Grands Lacs, des imprimeurs et des expéditeurs de journaux de Toronto, des

débardeurs de Montréal, des conducteurs de camions, des bûcherons du bois à pâte, et des travailleurs de la sidérurgie, de l'extraction du nickel et de la fonderie en Ontario.

Outre les tensions spéciales dues à la poussée inflationniste à laquelle est soumise l'économie canadienne vers le milieu de la décennie, un certain nombre d'éléments sociaux ou culturels plus ou moins caractéristiques de cette période favorisent la turbulence des relations du travail. L'un des principaux est le très grand changement démographique: en effet, beaucoup de travailleurs adolescents ou très jeunes adultes issus des générations très nombreuses des années 40 et du début des années 50 arrivent sur le marché du travail. Non seulement par leur nombre, mais par leur attitude et leur comportement, ils forment une force explosive. Mieux instruits que leurs aînés en moyenne, nés à une époque d'abondance et n'ayant donc pas connu les privations et les incertitudes de la grande dépression et de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, ils aspirent à des salaires plus élevés et à de meilleures conditions de travail, acceptent moins bien les restrictions que les gouvernements, les employeurs ou les dirigeants syndicaux leur imposent, et manifestent plus d'impatience. Avec la grande amélioration des moyens de communication mis à leur disposition, beaucoup d'entre eux subissent probablement aussi l'influence des heurts encore plus violents et explosifs qui opposent ailleurs les jeunes aux "pouvoirs établis", et qui se produisent dans d'autres domaines, comme les universités, les campagnes pour les droits civils, les manifestations contre la guerre du Vietnam et les émeutes des ghettos noirs aux Etats-Unis.

NOTES



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